THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE
FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

EDITED BY

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GENERAL EDITOR

J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.

BISHOP OF WORCESTER

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THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

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CANAAN
AS DIVIDED BETWEEN
THE TRIBES
GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN)
PHILISTINES
Zidon
Tyre
Accho
Mt. Carmel
Joppa
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
Ziklag?
Brook Besor?
Beersheba
Aroer
Zephath or Hormah?
Kadesh-barnea?
Wilderness of Paramorlites
Wilderness of Zin
Desert of Zin
Mt. Seir
EDOM
Ascent of Akrabbim
Sea of the Plain Salt or Dead Sea
Valley of Salt
Moab
Mizpeh
Arnon
Jahaz
Medeba
Heshbon
Rabbah
Ammonites
Gilead
Jabesh-gilead
Mahanaim?
Penuel
Succoth
Zaphon
Ramoth-gilead
Jazer
Aroer
Bezer
Hebron
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Jericho
Gilgal
Shiloh
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
Mt. Ebal
Samaria
Tirzah
Thebez
Ibleam
Mt. Gilboa
Megiddo
Jezreel
Taanach
Dothan
Nahalol
Mt. Tabor
Endor
Hill of Moreh
Nain
Beth-shan
Tiberias
Sea of Chinnereth
Kedesh
Haroseth
Kitron
Dor
Nahr Iskanderinch
Nahr el Falik
Nahr el Auja
Brook Kanah
Timnath heres
Joppa
Jehud
Ekron
Gezer
Bezek?
Ajalon
Gibeon
Beth-horon
Mizpeh
Lebonah
Shiloh
Bethel
Ophrah
Naarah
Michmash
Jericho
Gilgal
Aphek
Beth-shan
Ibleam
Mt. Gilboa
Bezek
Abelmeholah
Thebez
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THE BOOK
OF
JUDGES,

WITH MAP, NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible.* A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS, AUTHORSHIP AND DATE, GENUINENESS, CANONICITY, OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

1. *Contents.* The book of Judges consists of three parts. The *first* part (ch. i. 1, iii. 7) forms an Introduction, obviously designed to connect the book with the previous narrative in Joshua[1]. We have first a description of the condition of the Israelites immediately after Joshua's death, and their relations with the Phœnician peoples whom Joshua had left only half subdued (ch. i. 1—ii. 10). Then (ch. ii. 11—iii. 7) the writer proceeds to give a brief summary of his history chiefly from a moral and religious point of view, pointing out the cause of national misfortunes, namely the disobedience of the people to the national law, and their apostasy from the national religion. The *second* part (ch. iii. 8—xvi. 31) contains the history of the Judges. In the *third* part (ch. xvii. to end) the historian adds two episodes of a more private and personal character, obviously intended to illustrate the disordered condition of the morals of the people, and to point to the value in the author's mind of the more regular system of government under which he lived. These episodes[2] belong to a period of the history almost immediately subsequent to the death of Joshua, and are quite sufficient to account for the after history of the people.

[1] See note on ch. i. 1.

[2] See notes, especially on ch. xx. 28. Also below, p. 11.

2. *Authorship and Date.* The book has been attributed to various periods and to various authors. By some[1] the whole of the historical Scriptures are supposed (1) to have been reduced to their present form shortly before the captivity. Others have thought (2) that the book is of early origin, but that the part of it containing the history of Micah and the Danites, and the Levite and his concubine, was added by another hand. Keil supposes (3) from the statement in ch. i. 21, that it was written in the first seven years of David's reign, before the capture of Jerusalem[2], and that therefore the statement in the Talmud[3] that the book was written by Samuel is so far true that it may have been written at his request by one of his disciples[4]. With regard to (1) it may be remembered that the book of Judges shews many signs of independent authorship. For in Joshua, written when the Israelites had not been long in Palestine, and when the Book of the Law was the only book of importance in the literature of the nation[5], we meet with very few words and phrases not found in the books of Moses. But in Judges, written some centuries after the conquest, we find a large number of words hitherto unknown. Some of these, it is true, are poetical archaisms, which occur in the Song of Deborah, and these, of course, must be excepted from the list. But when these have been deducted there remain a number of words and turns of expression which shew that from a nation of slaves the Israelites had grown to be a nation of freemen and conquerors[6]. And on the other hand we may remark on the absence of Aramaic expressions and words of the later Hebrew which occur in the subsequent books.

We conclude therefore, that the book of Judges, as it stands,

[1] *E.g.* Ewald, Knobel, Bleek, De Wette, Davidson.
[2] 2 Sam. v. 6—9, 1 Chron. xi. 4—9. [3] Baba-bathra, 14*b* and 15*a*.
[4] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, Introduction.
[5] Unless, with some, we are to regard the Book of the wars of Jahveh (Numb. xxi. 14), and the book of Jashar (Josh. x. 13) as separate books. See Ewald, *History of Israel*.
[6] See notes on ch. i. 8, 14, ii. 13, 18, iii. 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 31, iv. 6, 10, 13, 18, 21, vi. 2, 26, 38, vii. 3, 5, 13, viii. 7, 21, 31, ix. 4, 6, 14, 46, xi. 6, xii. 5, xiii. 25, xiv. 12, xv. 8, 9, 16, 19, xvi. 13, 16, xix. 1, xx. 12, 32. This list might be largely increased.

was written later than the previous books of the Old Testament. We proceed to inquire whether the author were one and the same throughout. At first sight this would not appear to have been the case. The third part of the book contains a good deal of that peculiar kind of repetition for the sake of emphasis, which, found in the earlier historical books, is absent from the later ones[1]. But a closer examination of the style does not bear out the first impression. Several peculiarities of expression are to be found both in the main portion of the book and in the appendix beginning with ch. xvii[2]. The preface (especially ch. ii.) was evidently written by the author of the book upon a general view of its contents. The appendix falls in most strikingly with the drift of that general view. Thus it becomes more probable that the appendix was compiled by the author himself from private and local narratives which had fallen into his hands, and which he inserted with but little alteration. From whence those narratives were derived may perhaps be conjectured. The author was evidently a firm partisan of kingly government[3]. To its absence he apparently attributes all the disorders of the country, with which the system of judges, he felt, was incompetent to deal. He could hardly have been in all respects a disciple of Samuel[4], for that great prophet, with a noble enthusiasm, desired rather to maintain the theocracy, and raise the people to its level[5]. The writer of the present book, on the contrary, was clearly of opinion that

[1] Specimens of this kind of repetition, where the same story is related twice over, the second time with additional particulars, may be found in Gen. i., ii., vii. 7—16; Josh. iii., iv., vi. 6—9, 12—16. In the book of Judges it is only found to any considerable extent in the last five chapters. See ch. xvii. 1—5, xviii. 14—20, xx. 31—42.

[2] Cf. i. 8 with xx. 48, i. 27, with xvii. 11. Also i. 1 with xx. 18, 23, 27, ix. 2 with xx. 5. Also the use of the perfect with the copula, instead of the more usual historical narrative tense with Vau conversive is remarkable, in spite of Keil's attempt to attenuate the force of this argument. Compare especially xix. 30, xx. 43 and ch. xv. 14. The narrative in ch. xix. appears to have been re-written, for it flows on consecutively throughout.

[3] See ch. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25.

[4] As Keil and Delitzsch suppose.

[5] 1 Sam. viii. 6—22, xii. 16—19.

kingly government alone had been found capable of putting an end to the confusions of the times. This conviction points to an early period in the kingly history for the composition of this book. Had the writer lived under the later kings, he would have seen that, whatever the advantages of kingly government when the sceptre was in proper hands, they were by no means so great in every case as he supposed. Such intimations of date as we find in the book of Judges tend to confirm this view. These are by no means so many as are to be found elsewhere, but though we can perhaps build no argument on ch. i. 21, yet ch. vi. 24 would seem more reconcileable with the early than with the late date of this book[1]. Thus we are led to fix some period in the reigns of either David or Solomon as the time when the history was written. But the contents of the book itself furnish us with strong grounds for believing that it was written in the former reign. It will be observed that both the episodes related in the last five chapters are connected with Bethlehem-judah[2]. The scene of the Book of Ruth is laid in the same place. It is therefore by no means improbable that these narratives were communicated to the writers by David himself. Now we find that the prophets Nathan and Gad, who were closely connected with David[3], composed histories. We venture therefore to set down the book of Judges as written by one of the above-mentioned prophets, or under their supervision, after David had become undisputed king over Israel, and after he had overthrown his enemies round about, but most probably before the disorders of his later years, commencing with Absalom's rebellion. This would fix the date between 1042 and 1023 B.C.

3. *Genuineness.* The genuineness of the book is vouched for (1) by the consideration of its style, mentioned above (p. 10), (2) by the general life-like freshness of the narrative, to which even so unprejudiced a critic as Ewald frequently testifies, (3) by the minute accuracy of its local and other details, which are

[1] See notes on these passages.
[2] ch. xvii. 8, 9, xix, 1, 2, 18.
[3] 2 Sam. xii., xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29.

frequently mentioned in the notes[1], and (4) by the consideration referred to in note on ch. i. 1, that it forms an integral part of the authorized historical writings of the Jews, a body of literature which is clearly, from internal evidence, written by persons in authority, who had access to documents which gave them full information on the events treated of, but at such a distance of time as rendered a general view of the history possible.

4. *Canonicity.* Of this there can be no question. The book of Judges forms part, not only of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, but also of the Hebrew text, which appears (2 Macc. ii. 13) to have been handed down among the Jews from the time of Nehemiah. Though Josephus does not mention their names, there is no reason to doubt that the twenty-two books whose authenticity he describes as recognized in his time, were the same as are contained in our present Hebrew Bible. And the universal testimony of all Jewish writers establishes the fact that this book was one of the Canonical Scriptures of the Jews, that is, it was regarded by the Jews as written by inspiration of God. The Christian Church has ratified this decision, if not formally, at least effectually. Though no representative assembly of the whole Church has ever pronounced itself on the Christian Canon, yet practically all sections of the Christian Church have agreed to receive these twenty-two books, and the book of Judges among them, as those Canonical Books, "of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church[2]."

[1] i. 3, 9, 15—17, 27—36, iii. 3, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, iv. 5, v. 14—17, vi. 2, 4, 15, 33, viii. 24, 26, ix. 51, xiii. 25, xiv. 1, 5, 8, xviii. 7, 21, xix. 10, 12, xx. 1, 15, xxi. 19.

[2] Art. VI. of the Church of England.

CHAPTER II.

THE POLITICAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES.

I. *Conquest of Palestine.* In order to understand the mission of the Israelites, it will be necessary to glance at the circumstances under which they entered the land of Canaan. It was no ordinary people that they were commissioned to displace. The Phœnicians stood "at the head of the civilization of their time[1]." They were the greatest maritime and commercial people then known. Their colonies had spread over all the coasts of the Mediterranean. Their land was the home of the arts and sciences[2]. At a far earlier period than that of Joshua they had risen to eminence. But this was the period of their decay. The vices which for a long time had raged unchecked[3], had at length produced their usual effect in sapping the manly vigour of the people. Thus the Israelites were destined to play the same part on the shores of the Mediterranean in the fifteenth century before Christ, that the Germans did in the hour of the decrepitude of the Roman empire. There are many common features in the two histories. The austerer morals of the invading peoples, the slaughter of the vanquished, the adoption too often by the conqueror of the habits he began by despising—these were equally characteristics of the conquest of Palestine and the fall of the Roman Empire. But whereas the Germans infused their

[1] Bachmann, *Buch der Richter.* Introduction, p. 21.

[2] See Kenrick's *Phoenicia*, ch. viii., ix. The Greeks owed their literary culture in the first instance to the Phoenicians. The Egyptians were great architects, but they do not appear to have attained much eminence in the other arts. See an article by Stanley Lane Poole, in the *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1881.

[3] Gen. xiii. 13, cf. xix.

national spirit into the institutions of the more civilized people they had subdued, the Jews introduced a polity of their own into the land in which they settled—a polity of Divine origin, destined to produce incalculable results upon the future of the world.

II. *Institutions of the Jews.* The idea which underlay the Mosaic institutions was that of a Divine Society, with God as its acknowledged head, the books of Moses as its code of law and morals, and the priesthood, with its prophetic gift of Urim and Thummim[1], as the medium of communication between the Ruler and His people. This idea was never destined to be realized. Indeed it was fore-ordained to failure, so far as its adoption as a system by the Jewish community as a whole was concerned[2], though its ultimate effect was so beneficial to mankind, and its direct influence so vast upon individuals. During the life-time of Joshua and Phinehas, amid much individual depravity[3], an attempt was made to carry on the government in accordance with the provisions of the Law. The elders, at first appointed by Moses[4], and afterwards by Joshua, or by the common consent of the tribe, we know not which, exercised the necessary civil authority among the people[5]. Matters of moment, whether of war or peace, but especially the former, including, no doubt, the choice of a leader, were decided upon by a general assembly[6], in which counsel was formally asked of God. The occurrences in Mount Ephraim and at Gibeah, which clearly[7] occurred during the life-time of the "elders that outlived Joshua," give us a momentary glimpse of the working of the Mosaic institutions. The last five chapters of the book of Judges depict to us Israel under circumstances such as we never meet again. The memories and traditions of Joshua's

[1] See note on ch. i. 1.
[2] Josh. xxiv. 19; cf. Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16; Heb. vii. 11, 19.
[3] As the narratives in ch. xvii—xxi. shew.
[4] Exod. xviii. 25; Numb. xi. 16.
[5] Levit. iv. 15; Deut. xxv. 7, 8, xxix. 10, xxxi. 9, 28; cf. Ruth iv. 2, 4, Josh. xxii. 44; Judg. viii. 16.
[6] Josh. xxii. 12; Judg. xx. 1.
[7] ch. xx. 28.

government are yet fresh in men's minds. God is still recognized as the unseen governor of His people. The high priest formally asks counsel of Him in times of perplexity[1]. The people weep and fast and offer burnt offerings before His altar[2]. There is not a hint of idolatry throughout. Marriage with heathen women is a thing not even thought of[3]. And the ease with which all Israel is gathered together for war[4], displaying as it does so marked a contrast with later times, shews that the military organization established by Moses, and perfected by Joshua, was still in existence, in all its completeness But this state of things did not last long. The moral strength of the people had not been sufficiently developed to maintain it[5]. Consequently when the personal influence of the followers of Joshua was withdrawn, it fell into abeyance, and the successful invasion of Chushan-Rishathaim put an end to it, until the time of the great reformation under Samuel[6]. The worship of Jehovah still continued, but save in individual cases, its influence scarcely extended beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the sanctuary[7].

III. *Collapse of the Israelitish polity.* The theocratic polity of Israel disappears, then, most probably, with the death of Phinehas. Henceforth, individual tribes may possess a governmental organization, individual cities may appoint

[1] xx. 18, 23, 28. [2] xx. 26, xxi. 4.
[3] xxi. 7, 16—23. [4] xx. 1, 10, 17.
[5] "Israel had as yet scarcely found time to imbue itself deeply with the great truths which had been awakened into life in it, and to appropriate them as an inalienable possession." Ewald, *Hist. Israel*, II. p. 271.
[6] On the importance of Samuel's reformation see Jost, *Geschichte des Israelitischen Volkes*, I. 199, "As Moses took them out of Egypt," he says, "another was wanted to rescue them from Canaanitish influences. This was Samuel."
[7] Hengstenberg adduces the songs of Deborah and Hannah, the character of Gideon, and the Nazarite vow of Samson, as evidence that the old belief had not entirely died out (*Geschichte des Reiches Gottes*, II. 76). He might have instanced the whole of Sam. i.—iv., including the conduct of Hannah and the character of Eli, as proofs that among the people a devout minority was to be found quite sufficient to make God's Law a living influence, at least to a certain extent, even in the worst of times. See also p. 20.

their elders, two or three tribes may combine for common action, but no instance appears of all Israel acting in concert. Everything is confusion and disorganization, except when some leader arises who is capable of arousing the courage of a dispirited people. Then the successful hero becomes the centre of their hopes and affections. The whole government is vested in his person. He "judges Israel," we are told[1]. That is, the warlike leader becomes, by common consent, a civil magistrate. He exercises full, and if he pleases, almost despotic authority. But the recollection of the Theocracy is yet too vivid to permit of his assuming the title of king of Israel, or of his bequeathing his power to his descendants[2]. As the history progresses, the disorganization becomes more complete. The song of Deborah represents the tribes as incapable of a common effort. Judah is not even mentioned[3], and historians have wondered at the isolation of this tribe, which, after Othniel, did not produce a single judge, and which is not further referred to in the history except as being partially included in the general distress caused by the incursions of the Philistines and Ammonites. It would seem as if the tribe of Judah (in which the small tribe of Simeon was included)[4], secure in its numbers and mountain fastnesses, had held aloof from its brethren, and had maintained its independence until subjugated by the Philistines[5]. But not only was Judah content to stand apart. Though Ephraim and Manasseh and Benjamin and Issachar gave some slight assistance

[1] Some have compared the judges to the Carthaginian and Tyrian *suffetes*. The names are no doubt of common origin, since the Carthaginians were the descendants of the ancient Phoenicians who spoke a kindred language to the Hebrew. But the *suffetes* (Ewald, *Hist. Israel*, II. 36; Kenrick, *Phoenicia*, p. 268) were regular magistrates appointed by public election, and forming an integral portion of the political organization of the people, whereas the Judges were heroes (cf. Jost I. 175) who owed their influence to a victory over their country's oppressors, and whose very office testified to the utter disorganization of their nation.

[2] Judg. vii. 23.

[3] And was probably therefore not included in Jabin's oppression (Jost I. 178).

[4] See ch. i. 3, 17; cf. Josh. xix. 1, 9; Numb. xxvi. 14.

[5] See notes on ch. v. 17, viii. 1; cf. also ch. xv. 11, 1 Sam. iv.

in the struggle against Jabin[1], Reuben, Gilead (i.e. Gad and half Manasseh), Dan and Asher held aloof. Upon Zebulun and Naphtali fell the brunt of the battle[2]. These two last tribes, with the half tribe of Manasseh and part of Asher, took part in Gideon's attack on the Midianites, and Ephraim came to their assistance afterwards[3]. No mention is made of any other tribes, save as scoffing at Gideon and his little band[4]. After the deliverance by Gideon matters became still worse. Shechem, the capital, so far as Israel had a capital, chooses a king for itself without communication with the rest even of its own tribe, and the result is civil war. Jephthah ruled only over the region beyond Jordan[5]. The judges who succeeded him were judges only of the northern tribes[6]. Samson's authority was still more circumscribed, and was due only to the fear inspired by his personal prowess. He does not seem ever to have rallied round him even the scantiest band of his fellow countrymen. And when he is said to have "judged Israel," the words can only refer to an extremely limited area, and a jurisdiction of a most precarious kind, as the words "in the days of the Philistines[7]" clearly imply. A kind of hegemony seems to have been claimed by Ephraim, as possessing the principal city (Hebron, perhaps, excepted[8]), as well as from its central position, and from the tabernacle worship having been set up at Shiloh, within its borders. But even this undefined superiority was not very cheerfully recognized. Gideon admitted it[9], but Judah does not seem ever to have acknowledged it, and Jephthah the Gileadite rejected it with scorn[10].

IV. *Religious Apostasy.* This political disorganization was the direct result of the religious declension[11]. The only possible means of supremacy and even of safety for Israel was a resolute maintenance of the worship of the sanctuary[12], for

[1] ch. v. 14. [2] ch. v. 16—18. [3] ch. vi. 35, vii. 24.
[4] viii. 6, 8. [5] xii. 7. [6] xii. 8—14. [7] xv. 20.
[8] See i. 10, ix. 1 (notes). [9] viii. 2.
[10] xii. 1—4. See also Jost I. 195; Hengstenberg II. 72 sqq.; Hitzig, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 107; Ewald, *Hist. Israel*, II. 321.
[11] Wilberforce, *Heroes of Hebrew History*, 164, 165.
[12] Hengstenberg II. 12, 74; Hitzig 107.

it was the only bond of union, and the only guarantee of law and order and political importance that the people possessed. That neglected, there existed no other. They could not trust in their numbers. In civilization they were the inferiors of the Canaanites. Simplicity and austere purity of life was their only hope. The grossly sensual worship of the Phoenician gods[1] was certain to destroy what moral fibre the people possessed. And that, as the latter chapters of Judges shew, was very little. The Mosaic institutions were at present too lofty and pure for a people who had imbibed the vices of slaves, and had been trained in the heathen civilization of their Egyptian masters. The personal influence of men like Joshua and Phinehas no doubt secured a certain amount of external decorum. But occurrences such as those related in Numb. xxv. and Judg. xix. shew how insecure was the foundation of public morality. As soon as the worship of Jehovah was abandoned the only safeguard was swept away, and the whole nation speedily became almost as corrupt as its neighbours. The history does not fail to point out the connection between national apostasy and national ruin, and its silence is as eloquent as its direct assertions. Side by side with the complaints of the prevalence of idolatrous worship we may place the absence of any reference to that which God had enjoined. After the invasion of Chushan-Rishathaim there is no mention of a national observance of the law of Moses. The high priest is never once mentioned. Of the tabernacle worship we hear never a word. Micah led the way with his superstitious burlesque of the Mosaic rites[2], in which he had the countenance of a descendant of Moses. The Danites soon followed his example[3]. Gideon felt himself compelled to substitute the worship of a visible for that of an invisible Jehovah[4]. A few years later, and, in spite of Israel's repentance[5], Jephthah does not appear to have had the slightest knowledge of the provisions of God's law as affecting his vow[6], nor does any one suggest them to him. Samson and his parents, beyond their acquaintance with the

[1] See note on ch. ii. 11, 13.
[2] ch. xvii.
[3] ch. xviii.
[4] ch. viii. 27. See Jost I. 183.
[5] ch. x. 16.
[6] See note on ch. xi. 36.

precepts relating to the Nazarite vow, betray scarcely the slightest knowledge of the Mosaic institutions[1].

V. *Influence of the Mosaic Law.* Yet it would be a mistake to infer from this wide-spread demoralization and this general neglect of the Law that it had been altogether a failure during the period with which we are concerned. What its effect upon individuals was may be seen in the passages already mentioned[2], as well as in the delightful picture of pastoral simplicity, uprightness, and piety which meets us in the book of Ruth. The sacred fire was smothered, not quenched. Its rites may have been confined to its own immediate neighbourhood, but the worship of the tabernacle must have been kept up in almost unbroken continuance throughout the whole of the period between Joshua and Samuel[3]. The books of Moses still existed as a record of the high ideal set before Israel by Jehovah; a record to which his prophets could and did appeal[4]. The distresses and disorders in Israel were the evident results of a disobedience of its warnings. And the national conscience awoke to this fact under the exhortations of Samuel. Thus the period of the Judges was an important stage in the moral and religious development of Israel. It was a time of probation, a time of conflict between untamed nature and the discipline enjoined by God[5]. Not only were the precepts of the Mosaic law, in their conceptions both of God and of duty, far above the level of the Israelites, they were immeasureably superior to any the world had yet seen. And they had been given to a people who were at the time, save in the one point of a traditional monotheism—a tradition we have no reason to believe very clearly comprehended—probably behind rather than in advance of the Egyptians both in philosophical and ethical enlightenment. When Joshua died they had only enjoyed the advantage of the Mosaic institutions for about 60 years, and a

[1] Cf. ch. xiv. 3, with the strong prohibition in Deut. vii. 3, and Josh. xxiii. 12.

[2] See p. 16. [3] Ewald II. 442.

[4] ch. iii. 1; 1 Sam. ii. 27—30, vii. 3.

[5] Bachmann, *Commentary on Judges*, Introduction.

nation whose institutions are far in advance of themselves do not, as a rule, appreciate them as they should[1]. But adversity was to do its work, and recall Israel to a sense of the blessings it had slighted. The reform introduced by Samuel was a prelude to the glorious times of David and Solomon. And though a fresh rebellion against God brought in the end fresh distresses upon God's people, yet they never again, whatever their sins may have been, sank so low as in the period covered by this book. Manifold as were the shortcomings of the Jews, grievous as were their misapprehensions of the higher meaning of their Law, that Law never, after this, entirely ceased to be both a witness to the world at large of One God, holy, just and true, Who would reward righteousness and punish iniquity, and a protest against the base, impure, unworthy ideas of God current among the heathen.

VI. *Israel and her oppressors.* A few words should be added concerning Israel's oppressors. The first was a king of Mesopotamia[2], no doubt, as his name implies, a monarch of that Turanian dynasty founded by Nimrod in Babylon, before the Semitic kingdom founded by Asshur in Nineveh attained its supremacy. This was probably the last expiring effort of the Turanian power in Babylon. We read no more of Assyria or Babylon till the reign of Uzziah[3]. And this agrees with the recent discoveries from the monuments, which give us a time of anarchy and decay, previous to the transfer of power from Babylon to Nineveh[4].

The next period of oppression marks the last attempt of the Phoenicians to regain their ascendency over the land which

[1] We may illustrate this remark by a reference to the history of our own country. The laws and reforms of Ina and Offa, of Alfred, of Henry II., of Edward I. were excellent, but they were not properly carried out, and so, for a time at least, they seemed to fail of their object. The history of rising nationalities in our own time will suggest further parallels.

[2] See note on Chushan-Rishathaim, ch. iii. 8.

[3] 2 Kings xv. 19.

[4] See Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies.* Sayce, *Babylonian Literature.* In the latter a valuable summary of recent discoveries in Babylonian history is given in a small space.

had once been theirs. Jabin king of Canaan, no doubt in possession of the resources which centres of commerce like Tyre and Sidon must have amassed, was a powerful monarch[1]. But his decisive defeat by Barak put an end for ever to Phoenician ascendency in Palestine.

The next calamity was of a different character, more resembling the incursions of the Danes in our own history. Nomad tribes, known as the "children of the east[2]," invaded Palestine yearly, not for conquest, but for plunder, and their ravages caused the greatest terror and distress. But the signal chastisement inflicted on them by Gideon dispersed their bands, and delivered Israel permanently from these disorderly marauders.

This deliverance, however, wrought little real good. Since the true source of national strength had been forsaken, Israel lay at the mercy of her enemies on every side. The Philistines on the south, and the Ammonites on the east, endeavoured to partition the country between them[3]. The latter put forth as a plea their desire to regain the territory which was once theirs, but which, after having fallen into the hands of the Amorites, had been occupied by Israel[4]. The brunt of the Ammonite invasion had to be borne by Gilead. By Gilead, accordingly, it was at last repelled. With Jephthah at their head the trans-Jordanic tribes organized an expedition into the Ammonite territory[5], and put an end to Ammonite endeavours to subdue Israel.

The Philistine invasion was of a more formidable character. Dan and Judah were at the mercy of the invaders till the great victory under Samuel[6]. Samson's exploits, though they annoyed the Philistines, did not shake the foundations of their authority. It is doubtful if he did them as much injury as a guerilla chief might have done[7]. For in the time of Eli, who was probably

[1] ch. iv. 3. [2] ch. vi. 3.
[3] x. 7—9. [4] xi. 13. [5] xi. 32.
[6] Sam. vii. 10.
[7] Not so much, probably, as the border forays recorded in our history, or the raids by the Highlands upon the lowlands of Scotland.

contemporary with Samson, we find the Philistines penetrating beyond Judah and Dan into central Israel[1]. And the whole history of Samson implies that he and his countrymen were under Philistine dominion[2]. To relate how the Philistine yoke was shaken off is beyond our province. Commenced by Samuel, the struggle was carried on with varying success by Saul until the Philistine power was finally broken by David.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE JUDGES.

The history of the Old Testament, as we are often told, differs from ordinary history chiefly in this respect, that while in the latter we must be content as a rule to trace the secondary causes of events, in the Sacred history we are brought face to face with the primary cause, namely the Will of God. And thus it follows that the ethical lessons which all history is calculated to teach, lie more clearly upon the surface in Scripture than elsewhere. It has already been shewn that an ethical purpose underlies the whole of this history. And we cannot doubt that from the careers of the various Judges we are intended to learn what to imitate and what to avoid.

I. Of Othniel, Ehud, and Barak there is little to be said. The significant omissions of the sacred writer in the history of Ehud[3] are a sufficient proof of the fact that he did not commend a cowardly assassination. Othniel, we are led to suppose, was a brave and religious man[4]. Barak was no less personally brave, but he was superstitious. He could not conceive of the assistance of Jehovah without the personal presence of His prophetess[5].

[1] 1 Sam. iv. 1, cf. vii. 12. [2] ch. xiii. 1, xiv. 4, xv. 11.
[3] See note on ch. iii. 10.
[4] iii. 12, where the declension occurs after his death.
[5] iv. 8, 9.

II. Gideon's faith was also of no very robust kind. He possessed, however, a good deal of that sensitive, self-distrusting spirit which seems to mark all those who are called by God to high ventures for His cause[1]. And once convinced, he lacks neither courage nor conduct. His natural gifts were of a high order[2]. To them he adds a strong sense of duty, regardless of consequences, when his way is clear before him[3]. His natural disposition was gentle and unassuming, and where there seemed a reason for it, his inclination was toward measures of conciliation[4]. But he could be stern towards the wantonly cruel and the faithless to God and their brethren[5]. He had no ulterior aims, either for himself or his family in the deliverance he wrought for Israel[6]. But though he was sufficiently instructed in the law of God not to take part in the idolatrous worship of Canaan, he was nevertheless unable to rise sufficiently above his age to worship God as He had ordained, and he resorts to an unworthy compromise which becomes a source of temptation to himself and to his descendants[7].

III. Jephthah is a different character. He met with unfair treatment in his youth, which seems to have had an evil effect on his disposition[8]. An exile from his country[9], it was not likely that he could have had much acquaintance with the precepts of God's law. So he consorts with idle and dissolute persons[10], and the first question he asks when his reputation for bravery brings a request for assistance from those who before had unjustly treated him, relates to his own personal pre-eminence[11]. He was not devoid of great qualities. His reply to the king of Moab is temperate and statesmanlike[12]. But he could fiercely resent an insult, as the misplaced severity of his treatment of Ephraim shews[13]. His impetuosity of character, his deep parental affection combined with unbending resolution, as

[1] vi. 15, 22, 36—40, vii. 10; cf. Exod. iv. 10—14, vi. 12, 30; Is. vi. 5; Jer. i. 6.
[2] ch. vi. 12, 14. [3] vi. 27, vii. 15.
[4] viii. 2, 3, 19. [5] viii. 13—21. [6] viii. 23.
[7] viii. 27. [8] xi. 2. [9] xi. 3. [10] *Ib.* [11] xi. 9.
[12] xi. 15—27. [13] xii. 6.

well as his ignorance of the precepts of his religion, come out clearly in the narrative of his vow.

IV. Samson is more fully pourtrayed than that of any other of these ancient heroes of Israel. His individuality, in all its strength and weakness, is placed forcibly before us in this book. He has been regarded by some as a type of his country [1]. He might rather be looked upon as a type of humanity at large. His amazing strength, his child-like simplicity, his undisciplined affections, his aspirations after better things, his yielding to the impulses of his passions, his consequent misery, slavery and death, as well as his repentance when it was too late, are only too true a picture of human nature, when unsubdued by the Gospel of Christ.

In his history we find some interesting pictures of those far-off days. The simple pastoral life of his father and mother, Samson's choice of a wife—throwing light as it does upon the position of women, and the marriage customs of the age—the marriage feast and its amusements, the scarcely concealed contempt of the dominant race for its subjects, the lawlessness of times when might was right [2]—all these serve to explain the condition of society in southern Israel under Philistine rule. Some have detected a comic vein in the incidents of Samson's career [3]. But this characteristic of the history appears to be the creation of a vivid imagination. Simplicity and naturalness there is, gradually deepening into tragedy as the dark shadow of sin indulged crept over Samson's life. At first we read of a light-hearted youth, frank, trustful, affectionate, obedient to his parents, rejoicing in the consciousness of a strength which as yet has never been misused. Then the darker shades of his character begin to appear. Promptness to avenge an injury, fierce resentment against the oppressors of his country, quickened into action by wounded affections, are developed by the high-handed treatment of the Philistines. And then, after an interval, we

[1] Hengstenberg II. 63.
[2] See ch. xiv. 15, xv. 6.
[3] See Ewald, *History of Israel*, II. 399, 400; Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, I. 257.

have as it were a second Samson, the older and better self being "as good as buried[1]", when the second sad chapter of his life begins with ch. xvi. Here we find that "the man who had burst the fetters of his foes could not break the cords of his own lusts[2]". After a course of lawless indulgence, he becomes the helpless slave of one of his paramours. We find him like a moth fluttering round a candle, each time coming more perilously near to the fatal revelation of his secret. And then, that secret once revealed, we see him in the hands of his enemies, blinded, fettered, degraded, the sport of those who had once trembled at his name. And it is here that our great poet, with the touch of a fellow feeling, takes him up, and gives us a picture of the hero in his last hours, which is unsurpassed by any effort even of his great genius.

Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits, if I must dye
Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in Brazen fetters under task
With this Heav'n-gifted strength?

. . . . . .

Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine Prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?

. . . . . .

But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries;

. . . . . .

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse then chains,
Dungeon, or beggery, or decrepit age!

. . . . . .

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first created beam, and thou great Word,

[1] Hengstenberg II. 61.
[2] St Ambrose, cited by Keil. See note on ch. xvi. 1.

Let there be light, and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon.
. . . . . .
To live a life half dead, a living death
And buried; but O yet more miserable!
My self, my Sepulchre, a moving grave.
. . . . . .

MILTON, *Samson Agonistes.*

The exploits of Samson have been thought to have suggested those of the Greek Heracles[1]. It is possible that the Greek myth may have originated in the incidents of his life. In one respect the Greeks have improved on their model. Samson becomes in their hands no mere local chieftain, fighting "for his own hand" against the oppressors of his country. He becomes a kind of knight-errant, doing life-long battle against all oppressors and abuses, and yet withal most human.

Fired with such burning hate of powerful wrong
So loving of the race, so swift to raise
The fearless arm and mighty club and smite
All monstrous growths with ruin.
. . . . . .
and yet was the while
A very man, not cast in mould too fine
For human love, but ofttimes snared and caught
By womanish wiles, fast held within the net
His passions wove.

EPIC OF HADES, *Deianeira.*

Still the Hebrew narrative touches here as ever, a deeper chord of moral truth. Samson's history, like every other in Holy Writ, illustrates the misery of sin and the beauty of holiness. It brings before us a man, strong in the power of a consecration to God's service, and a mission from Him to overthrow His enemies. It represents him as victorious as long as

[1] "Herculem Thebanum non male compares, ingenti robore corporis animique, mulieribus addictum." Grotius on Judg. xiv. 15. He is only "the Samson of the inspired record, distorted, and robbed by the thick vapours of heathendom of the moral teaching which breathes everywhere from the history of Manoah's son." Wilberforce, *Heroes of Hebrew History*, 193.

that divine consecration is maintained, and the vow with which it was connected is observed. But the indulgence in sensual lusts is fatal to that consecration[1]. The strength from above departs, and the victim of sin becomes a miserable slave to those whom in his days of innocence and piety, he had despised. No more striking illustration could be conceived of the tyranny of evil habits, no more moving exhortation to preserve carefully the sources of that strength which cannot be maintained, except by purity and self-control.

VI. Of the typical character of these heroes of ancient Israel it is not necessary to say much. The whole struggle of the people of God against their heathen environment is, as St Paul implies[2], typical of the struggle of the Christian Church and of the individual Christian against the evil influences around. Each of these deliverers of Israel is moreover in some sense typical of the One great Deliverer of Israel, in Whom all that was great, strong or worthy in humanity finds its counterpart. But there is no marked typical character in the life of Gideon, Jephthah or Samson, such as we see in Moses or Joshua, David or Elijah. Yet the early fathers, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine and others, especially the two former, carry out their allegorical treatment of this history in a number of fanciful details. Perhaps the most effective specimen of this kind of allegory is to be found in St Augustine[3], in which he compares Samson's arms, extended to grasp the two pillars, to those of our Lord extended on the Cross, and draws a parallel between Samson's death, more fatal to his enemies than his life, and that of Christ, Whose death achieved for mankind what His life in the flesh could never have purchased for them. But, like the solar myths which some discover in the history of Samson[4], these creations belong rather to the region of poetry or fancy than of historical fact.

[1] "Would that he had been as cautious in preserving grace, as strong in overcoming an animal!" Ambrose, *De Spiritu Sancto*, Bk. II.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. [3] Serm. 107, *De Temp.*

[4] Dr Steinthal, in Prof. Goldziher's *Mythology of the Hebrews*, who derives Samson (Shimshon) from Shemesh, Sun.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH.

Hebrew poetry in general would naturally be discussed under the head of the poetical books. But inasmuch as one of the oldest as well as one of the most striking of the lyric poems of the Hebrews occurs in this book, a few words about the principal features of their poetry may not be out of place.

1. *Early Hebrew poetry.* The earliest Hebrew poem is the song of Lamech (Gen. iv. 23)[1]. Noah's blessings and curse on his sons comes next (Gen. ix. 25). After this comes Jacob's blessing (Gen. xlix). Then we have the first battle ode of the Israelites, the stirring song of Miriam (Exod. xv.). In Numb. x. 35, 36, we have the germ of that magnificent processional Psalm (Ps. lxviii.) which, according to many commentators of note[2], was composed for the setting up of the ark at Jerusalem, and which embodied part of Deborah's song[3]. In Numb. xxi. we have numerous extracts from early poems which have not come down to us, such as the song of the wars of Jehovah (*v.* 14), the song of the well (*v.* 17), the song of the victory over Moab (*vv.* 17—30). After this the only other poetical pieces which have come down to us are the two songs of Moses in Deut. xxxii., xxxiii., unless the superscription of Ps. xc. be accurate, as many have believed it to be. It is strange that

[1] Unless we regard the curse of Adam (Gen. iii. 14—16) as poetry. But the prose of strong emotion or solemn prediction often assumes a poetic form. "One may fairly say that a rigorous distinction between poetry and prose was unknown to the Israelitish writers, as it still is to nations on a low level of worldly culture." Rev. T. K. Cheyne in *Variorum Teacher's Bible.* The priest's blessing (Numb. vi. 23—26), may perhaps be a specimen of this border land between poetry and prose.

[2] See Perowne on the Psalms. Ps. lxviii. Introduction.

[3] See notes on ch. v.

Joshua's victories do not seem to have been celebrated in song, except the extract from the "book of Jasher" in ch. x., which seems to be a quotation of some poem. Nothing more has been handed down to us until the victory of Mount Tabor once more awakened the poetic muse of the children of Israel.

2. *Characteristics of Hebrew poetry.* The more polished forms of metre and rhyme were unknown to primitive poetry, though the Greeks, as is seen in the poems of Homer and Hesiod, adopted this more exact form at a very much earlier period than other nations. In Hebrew poetry a rude kind of rhythm, accompanied by a good deal of alliteration, is all that is found. The alliteration is much less, conspicuous, however, than it was in the early Anglo-Saxon poetry, in which it was a necessary feature[1]. But the one most conspicuous characteristic of Hebrew poetry is what is called *parallelism*, in which the second portion of a distich embodies an idea in some way corresponding to the first. This was due to the custom of *antiphonal recitation*, such as we find mentioned in Exod. xv. 21. It is still kept up in a manner in the singing of the Psalms among ourselves. But the *rationale* of it is altogether lost in our habit of singing the whole verse antiphonally instead of only a part of it.

Hebrew parallelism is of various kinds. (*a*) *Synonymous parallelism.* This occurs when the second portion of the verse simply repeats the idea of the first in different words. This is the most common form of parallelism. We find it in the song of Lamech (Gen. iv. 23), and it meets us frequently in the song of Deborah[2].

[1] In Anglo-Saxon poetry the rule was very definite. The lines were divided into couplets, and in each couplet the alliteration was expected to occur twice in the first, and once in the second line. See for instance the following passage from Caedmon:

*H*alig & *he*ofon-beorht
*H*atan fyres.

This alliteration is still the chief feature of English poetry as late as Langland, who was contemporary with Chaucer. It has recently been revived with effect by the Laureate.

[2] See *vv.* 3—6, 12, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28.

(*b*) *Antithetic parallelism.* This is where the second member of the sentence expresses the *opposite* idea to the first. Of this the only instances in Deborah's song are found in *vv.* 25, 31. This form of parallelism, though it is frequently to be found in the later Hebrew poetry, is rare in the earlier. But instances may be found in the blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix. *v.* 19, 27.

(*c*) *Corroborative parallelism.* A third kind of parallelism is when the second member of the sentence extends and completes the idea of the first. A good instance of this is to be found in the song of Lamech, Gen. iv. 24. It is to be found in the first verse of Deborah's song, where the idea of the readiness of the leaders is reinforced in the second member of the sentence by the responsive willingness of the people. So also in v. 10, 12, 14, 19. Some fine examples of this are to be found in Ps. xix. 7—11.

(*d*) *Introverted parallelism.* This is where, in four[1] clauses, either (1) the first corresponds to the last and the third to the second, or (2) the first to the third, and the second to the fourth. An instance of (1) may be found in Proverbs xxiii. 15, 16:

1 My son, if wise be thy heart
3 My heart shall rejoice, even mine also,
4 And my reins shall exult
2 When thy lips speak words of uprightness.

An instance of (2) can be found in the song of Deborah itself, v. 19:

1 The kings came, they fought,
3 Then fought the kings of Canaan
2 At Taanach, hard by the waters of Megiddo,
4 Spoil of silver did they not take.

[1] Or even, as has been thought by Bishop Jebb, eight. But the theory has been carried to an extravagant extent. Thus it has been supposed that in Ps. cxxxv. 15—18, the first line corresponds to the eighth, the second to the seventh, the third to the sixth and the fourth to the fifth—a supposition altogether destructive of the true parallelism of the passage.

(*e*) Beside this simple correspondence of the first and second members of the sentence there is also a construction in which the two parallel members of the sentence lead up to a kind of conclusion or climax. Of this we have many instances in the song before us. Thus in v. 7 we have (1) the faintheartedness of the rulers, (2) the awakening of a new spirit in Israel by Deborah, (3) a heightening of the effect by the words "mother in Israel;" *v.* 8 carries on the idea to its climax by first introducing the proclamation of war, and next by referring to the unarmed condition of the people. Thus the description of the leaders in Israel (*v.* 9) is naturally introduced, and in *v.* 10 this description is again heightened by successive touches. In *vv.* 15, 16, we have a more definite repetition at the end of the strophe, of the idea with which it commenced, with an intermediate parallel sentence placing the scene in descriptive language clearly before our eyes. *V.* 30 is a good double instance of this construction.

(*f*) And finally, there are many verses in which the second part of the thought has no correspondence to the first, but the two are connected together by a more or less rhythmical flow of syllables. No instances of this occur in the song before us, but they are very common elsewhere. A beautiful example may be seen in Deut. xxxii. 10, 11.

3. *Characteristics of the Song of Deborah.* Poems like these, in celebration of some great national victory, are common in the literature of every people in its early stages. Our own literature contains one remarkable specimen, included, like Deborah's song, in the national annals. This is the song of the battle of Brunanburh, which unexpectedly interrupts the prosaic details of the Saxon Chronicle[1]. Similar specimens of lyric poetry may be found in Ranke's *Servia and Montenegro*[2]. The poems

[1] See Saxon Chronicle, Reign of Aethelstan, A. D. 937.

[2] He gives *piesmas*, as they are called, relating to modern events, such as the conquest of Venice by Bonaparte, and the taking of Cattaro in 1813. The following passage, taken from a *piesma* on a battle fought in 1832, may be interesting as an illustration. "He may go now, the Pacha Namik-Hamil, and pay his court to the pure Tsar of Stamboul,

of the Hebrews were sung on festive occasions to the accompaniment of cymbals and drum or tambourine[1], but were probably, like the Greek and other early epic and lyric poems, also recited in a kind of rude chant without such accompaniment. The song of Deborah is an admirable specimen of such compositions. Though it falls short of Miriam's song in grandeur and solemnity, it is unrivalled in the vigour and picturesqueness of its descriptive passages[2]. The description of the Reubenites taking counsel in the comfort of their pastoral retreats and yet doing nothing; the enumeration of the heavenly forces arrayed against Sisera, the fierce energy of the curse on Meroz, suddenly introduced into the vivid picture of the utter rout of Sisera and his chariots, may be instanced as especially fine passages where all is excellent. But the grandest portion of the poem is its conclusion, a climax to which all the rest leads up, wherein Sisera's death is described, and the disappointment of his mother's vain expectations of his triumph. It may safely be said that this portion has never been surpassed by any poetry whatsoever.

4. *Historical value of the song.* The song of Deborah is invaluable for the glimpse we obtain of the feelings of the Israelites, the conditions and customs of the country, the relations of the tribes[3]. As we read it, we not only seem to see the warriors of Israel assembling for the battle, but we see the

who had given him the command of his fine Nizams that he might change calves into lions. Serb falcons, how well you put the Imperial Pachas back into the right road with your carbines, that they should not lose themselves and their men in the deep forests." But the earlier poetry is much superior to the later. See Ranke, *Montenegro*, ch. iii.—v.

[1] Heb. *toph*. See Exod. xv. 20. Also note on ch. xi. 34.

[2] "Deborah's hymn of triumph was worthy of the victory. The solemn religious commencement—the picturesque description of the state of the country—the mustering of the troops from all quarters—the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof—the life, fire and energy of the battle—the bitter pathos of the close—lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production." Milman, *History of the Jews*, I. 247.

[3] See Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, Vol. I.

pastoral life of the quiet villages, the simple dignity of the men of influence. We see that patriotic feeling and devotion to Jehovah, though rare, were by no means extinct. We see a picture of a downtrodden people, obliged to forsake the beaten tracks, and to wander through hidden recesses. Though the feeling expressed toward Jael may be exaggerated, yet we can understand the revulsion of joy and gratitude which burst forth when the oppressor was slain. And the song contains the most interesting information about the condition and occupations of the tribes, the isolation of Judah, the irresolution of Reuben, the indifference of Gad, the selfish conduct of Dan and Asher, engrossed in commercial and maritime pursuits. Nothing else in the sacred narrative gives us such an insight into the inner life of Israel as this song.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PERIOD.

The chronology of the Book of Judges is involved in some difficulty. Upwards of fifty different ways of explaining it have been suggested[1]. Many of these are fanciful and capricious, but it must be admitted that sufficient data do not exist for the complete solution of the problem. For first of all the notes of time are indefinite, especially after the time of Gideon. Up to that date they are explicit enough. And we are also told that the period of apostasy which followed him commenced "as soon as he was dead[2]." But from the time of Abimelech onward we have no definite marks of time. The narrative simply says "after him." And as Israel grew more disorganized

[1] Bennigsen, cited in Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, p. 276 (English Translation). See also Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, II. 327, 8).
[2] ch. viii. 33.

the sphere of the Judges' influence became more contracted, until the later Judges became, as is evident, mere local authorities. Jair seems to have been the last who possessed any general authority, for we read that, though a Gileadite, he died in the land of Canaan[1], which implies that he had lived there. Thus it becomes almost certain that the period between Jephthah and the death of Abdon overlaps the narrative of chapters xiii.—xvi., and that this again overlaps the history in 1 Sam. i.—vi. Again, the periods of seven, twenty, forty and eighty years given in the Book of Judges have all the appearance of being round numbers, rather than exact dates. Any attempt therefore to construct a series of dates for the whole period must necessarily fail.

We have then to examine whether there be any definite marks of time which may give us a general, as contrasted with a consecutive, view of the chronology of the period. And this is given (1) by the statement in 1 Kings vi. 1. that the period between the Exodus and the dedication of the temple was 480 years. It is true that this is not absolutely beyond doubt. The LXX. reads 440[2], but this reading was generally abandoned even from very early times[3]. A second mark of time has been thought to have been given (2) by St Paul in Acts xiii. 20. But the text in this passage varies very much, and it appears more probable that the date referred to the interval between the call of Abraham and the conquest of Palestine. A third standard has been thought to be fixed (3) by the genealogies in the Book of Chronicles[4]. But this, again, is a somewhat unsubstantial basis for a chronology. In the genealogy of our Lord, given by St Matthew, there are several omissions. The time, moreover, which is covered by these genealogies is shorter than the history requires, and if adopted, leads to the arbitrary attempt,

[1] See note on ch. x. 5, and cf. xii. 7.

[2] In the Vat. and Alex. Codices. Some editions have altered the text to correspond with the Hebrew.

[3] Thus Aquila and Symmachus adopt the present Hebrew text. It is rejected altogether by Canon Rawlinson in the *Speaker's Commentary*, 1 Kings vi. 1, but apparently on insufficient grounds.

[4] See *Speaker's Commentary*, Judges. Introduction.

already mentioned, to remove the date in 1 Kings vi. from the text. Lastly, we have (4) Jephthah's statement that 300 years[1] had elapsed since the overthrow of Sihon.

We may therefore give the following table of the period between the Exodus (circ. B.C. 1491) and Jephthah's deliverance:

The wandering in the wilderness	40 years
Conquest of Palestine	7 ,,
To the death of Joshua	10 ,,
The elders that overlived Joshua	10 ,,
Chushan-Rishathaim's oppression	8 ,,
Othniel's deliverance—rest	40 ,,
Moabite oppression	18 ,,
Ehud's deliverance—rest	80 ,,
Jabin's oppression	20 ,,
Deborah's deliverance—rest	40 ,,
Midianite oppression	7 ,,
Gideon's deliverance—rest	40 ,,
Abimelech	3 ,,
Tola	23 ,,
Jair	22 ,,
Period to Jephthah	368

If we reckon the period of Samuel's judgeship and Saul's reign to be 40 years, David's reign of 40 years and the three years from Solomon's accession to the dedication of the temple (1 Kings vi. 1), this will give a period of only 30 years for the events described in chapters xi.—xvi., of the Book of Judges, and i.—vii. of the first book of Samuel. It must be admitted that this interval is too short[2]. It is also a question whether the period of 20 years from the settlement of Palestine to the death of the "elders that outlived Joshua" is long enough. Josephus makes Joshua to survive the conquest of Canaan 25 years. But if we suppose, as we have seen there is good reason for doing, that the periods of rest and oppression are round numbers, quite sufficient margin will be left for the extension of these two periods to a sufficient length to satisfy the requirements of the history. And the 300 years mentioned by Jephthah are also sufficiently near to the truth, for deducting the 40 years during which the Israelites wandered in the wilder-

[1] Obviously in round numbers.
[2] See however note on ch. xiii. 1.

ness, we have 328 years from the conquest of Heshbon to the time of Jephthah. And if this period be reduced by shortening somewhat the various periods of rest assigned to the children of Israel we have a very close approximation indeed to accuracy in Jephthah's statement. There is every probability, on the other hand, that the events related in ch. xiii.—xvi. may have occurred in the time of Jephthah and his successors, mentioned in ch. xii. Nor is there anything in the history to prevent the narrative of 1 Sam. i.—iii. from having occurred in the days of Abdon the Pirathonite, for he lived in Mount Ephraim, and that district seems to have enjoyed comparative quiet in the days of Elkanah and Eli. The battle of Aphek may have occurred immediately after his death. The exploits of Samson probably occurred in the dark days which followed this triumph of the Philistines, and synchronize with the period which immediately preceded Samuel's appeal to Israel related in 1 Sam. vii. 3.

It is not pretended that this is more than an approximation to the actual dates of the events related in the Book of Judges. Any attempt to construct an exact system of chronology is clearly impossible. Yet inasmuch as the date usually fixed for the Exodus, and the date actually ascertained from the Egyptian monuments of the accession of Sheshonk, or Shishak, give a period of about 475 years from the Exodus to the accession of Solomon, it may be safely concluded that the date of the occurrences in this history may be fixed within about 15 or 20 years, as near an approach to accuracy as can be expected.

CHAPTER VI.

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THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

CHAP. I. 1—9. *The prosecution of the Conquest of Canaan.*

NOW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the 1
children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall

CHAP. I. 1—9. THE PROSECUTION OF THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

1. *Now...it came to pass*] Literally, "*and* it came to pass." These words are the usual ones in Hebrew for the continuation of a narrative. So Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges 1 and 2 Samuel, and 2 Kings begin. Exodus, Deuteronomy (according to the Peshito and the Alexandrian Codex of the LXX.), and 1 Kings begin with the copulative conjunction only. It is obvious from this commencement, that the book of Judges is marked out "as a link in the chain of books which in unbroken connection relate the history from the creation of the world to the exile of the inhabitants of the southern kingdom" (*Bertheau*). Thus we may infer that these books were from the first intended to form the authorized collection of historical books of the Jewish nation.

after the death of Joshua]. This fixes yet more distinctly the purpose of the author of the book of Judges to continue the history from the point at which the book of Joshua had left it. It will be observed that these words correspond verbally with those that form the commencement of the book of Joshua, substituting Moses for Joshua and omitting that title of respect "the servant of the Lord" (or rather "Jehovah"—see note below) which in this special position seemed only suitable to the founder (under God) of Jewish institutions, though the title "servant of Jehovah" is given to Joshua, naturally enough, at the close of the record of his great doings, in Josh. xxiv. 29, and is quoted from thence in this book in ch. ii. 8.

asked the Lord] No doubt "after the judgment of Urim" (see Numb. xxvii. 21), as in ch. xx. 18, 23, 27; 1 Sam x. 22, xxii. 10, and many other places. The Targum says that the *Meim'ra*, or Word of God, was consulted. For *the Lord*, here and elsewhere read *Jehovah*, or, as is preferable, *Jahveh*, the name by which Israel's God was distinguished from the gods of the nations round about. The name signifies Him of Whom existence can be predicated as an attribute—the self-existent, and it is identical with the third person of the verb *to be*.

go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against
2 them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold,
3 I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go
4 with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and

Who shall go up] This expression must not be pressed, with some commentators, to mean "go up" literally into the mountainous country which formed the greater part of the inheritance of Judah. It was the ordinary word for an aggressive military movement (see Josh. viii. 3; Judg. xx. 23), though no doubt the expression originated with the fact that fortresses in those early times were usually situated on heights.

for us] As yet Israel was united as one people, and the tribe or tribes who commenced hostilities would be conferring a considerable benefit on the rest.

first] Literally, **at the beginning**. The LXX. render *as the leader*, and the Vulgate *and will be leader of the war*. The Chaldee steers a middle course between the two renderings. But our own translation is preferable. Judah only (with Simeon at Judah's special invitation) was designated to undertake this expedition.

2. *And the Lord said*] No doubt, as Josephus says (*Ant.* v. 1), the officiating priest was Phinehas. Cf. Josh. xxiv. 33, and Judg. xx. 28.

3. *And Judah said unto Simeon his brother*] This mode of speaking of the tribes as though they were individuals is common in Scripture. See for instance ch. xi. 27. The sense of unity was soon lost by the nation at large, but its existence as regards the tribes was far more tenacious. The choice by Judah of Simeon for an ally is explained by the fact (see Josh. xix. 1, 9) that the inheritance of the comparatively small tribe of Simeon had been taken out of that of Judah. Blunt (*Undesigned Coincidences*, I. 25) supposes the tribe of Simeon to have been involved in the transgression of Zimri (Numb. xxv. 14), and that this accounts for the smallness of their numbers, which is recorded as 59,300 in Numb. i. 23, and as 22,200 in Numb. xxvi. 14. The choice of Simeon, as here recorded, is itself a coincidence, and could hardly have occurred to an inventor.

lot] A natural expression, so soon after the tribes had had their possessions divided to them by lot. See Josh. xv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 1, &c.

4. *the Canaanites*] The word, derived from the root signifying to bow down, was originally applied to the low-lying strip of coast between the mountains and the sea. But as the Canaanites or low-landers prospered commercially, they became the dominant people of the land, which ultimately derived its name from them. To the Gentile world they were known as Phoenicians, the inventors of letters, the originators of

the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew *of* them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in 5
Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the

commerce, the patrons of the arts. The principal feature which struck the Jews was their gross licentiousness, which was hardly a crime in the eyes of heathen nations. For these abominations (Levit. xviii. 24—28; Deut. ix. 4) they were doomed to destruction.

the Perizzites] The best authorities seem to have come to the conclusion that the inhabitants of Palestine were a mixed race, and that—the Hittites excepted, see note on *v.* 26—as a rule they obtained their names not from ethnological considerations, but from their geographical position or habits of life. Thus the Hivites were the dwellers in villages (Havvoth, see Havoth-jair, Numb. xxxii. 41, Deut. iii. 12, Josh. xiii. 30), engaged in pasture, while the Perizzites were the dwellers in the open country (Perazim or Perazoth, see Deut. iii. 5; 1 Sam. vi. 18; Esther ix. 19), and were occupied in cultivating the land. See articles on Hivite and Perizzite in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. See also last note and that on *v.* 34. Also ch. v. 7, 11.

and they slew of them] Literally, **smote them, ten thousand men.** Most likely the extermination of their enemies is implied in the Hebrew text. Our version, which follows the Vulgate here, gives a different impression. The LXX. renders as above.

Bezek] This place has not been identified. Keil would make it one of the two cities mentioned in the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius and Jerome, situate seven hours north of Shechem. But it is most unlikely that Judah and Simeon carried out operations so far from their own border. Mr Conder, in his *Bible Handbook*, would identify it with Bezkah, near Lydda. This is scarcely more probable. Canon Tristram, in his *Bible Places*, more wisely leaves it unnoticed. Cassel conjectures with some probability that it was not a town, but a district; but he assigns no convincing reasons for placing it near the Dead Sea. With the aid of 1 Sam. xi. 8, and *vv.* 3 and 8 we may, however, be able to obtain a clearer idea of its whereabouts. It must have been near Gibeah of Saul (1 Sam. xi. 4), and Gibeah of Saul (see note on chap. xix. 12) was not far from Jerusalem in a north-easterly direction. It must have been to the north of Judah, for had it been in the south Judah would have proposed to go into Simeon's lot, and not have asked the assistance of Simeon to go up into theirs. Lastly, it was not far from Jerusalem, for Adoni-bezek fled there, and the reduction of Jerusalem was one of the final results of the expedition.

5. *Adoni-bezek*] With this name compare Adoni-zedek in Josh. x. 1. Its meaning, according to Rosenmüller, is simply lord of Bezek, as Adoni-zedek is lord and Melchizedek king of righteousness. Nothing more is known of this king beyond his confession of cruelty below, which shews him to have been a powerful monarch. The way in which he is mentioned confirms this. And yet there is nothing in the book of Joshua

6 Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and
they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his
7 thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Three-
score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great
toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have
done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him

to hint at his existence, nor do we know for certain where the seat of his power was. But we may gather from *v.* 7 that his head-quarters were at Jerusalem. It is possible that he may have been the son of Adoni-zedek, who appears (Josh. x. 1) to have been the chief monarch in these parts, and possibly, like many other Eastern monarchs, he had been associated with his father in the regal dignity. This seems the more probable, since no king, after the invasion by Joshua, was in a position to inflict the cruelties which are detailed below. The idea that he was king of Jerusalem derives additional probability from the fact that among the cities taken by Joshua Jerusalem is not numbered, in spite of Adoni-zedek having been the leader of the confederation annihilated at Beth-horon. After the overthrow and death of Adoni-zedek, his successor would find a safe retreat in a mountain fastness like Jerusalem. See Josh. x. 23—26, xv. 63.

slew] Literally **smote**, as above.

6. *caught him*] Or rather **laid hold on him, took** him, as we say, that is, took him prisoner.

cut off his thumbs and his great toes] It does not appear that the Israelites were accustomed thus to mutilate their foes. It was no doubt done in this case as an act of retribution on the cruel monarch who had inflicted this barbarous punishment on so many others. This cruel punishment was common among heathen nations. The Athenians had the thumbs of the defeated Aeginetans cut off that they might not wield the spear, though they handled the oar. Curtius (*De rebus gestis Alex.* v. 17) tells us how the Persians cut off the hands, feet, and ears, of four thousand Greek captives and thus kept them for a perpetual laughing-stock.

7. *Threescore and ten kings*] Palestine appears to have been divided into a host of petty states, for every city Joshua took appears to have had its king (see also Josh. xii.), nor do we find any city, save Gibeon and the Philistine cities, which was not under regal government, though Josh. xi. 3 seems to imply that some were so. Many of these kings were no doubt vassals of the more powerful monarchs.

gathered their meat *under my table*] More literally, **gleaned** under my table. The word signifies to collect one by one, or slowly, various objects, as stones, flowers, ears of corn when gleaning (Ruth ii. 8, &c.). It here implies the difficulty with which these poor mutilated objects picked up the food their haughty master flung to them on the ground. Athenaeus (*Deipnosophist*, iv. 152) tells us how the king of the Parthians used so to fling food to a courtier, who had to catch it like a dog. Some authorities, as Grotius reminds us, have similarly described the treatment

to Jerusalem, and there he died. Now the children of 8
Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and
smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on
fire.

And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight 9
against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in
the south, and in the valley.

of the Ottoman Sultan Bajazet by Tamerlane. The story of the iron cage appears to be authentic, though Tamerlane's cruelty has possibly been exaggerated. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 65.

8. *Now the children of Judah had fought*] The natural translation is **and the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem**, i. e. *after* the capture of Adoni-bezek. Our translators have supposed that the transactions related in this and the following verses preceded the expedition related above. It is often difficult to trace the sequence of events in Hebrew from the lack of a pluperfect tense in that language. It seems probable, from a comparison of this verse with Josh. xv. 63 and 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, that though Judah and Simeon took Jerusalem and set the city on fire, the Jebusites retired into a citadel from which their enemies failed to dislodge them, and ultimately re-occupied the city. See note on *v.* 10, 21. Also ch. xix. 10.

with the edge of the sword] Literally, at the **mouth** of the sword, no doubt in reference to the devouring nature of war.

set the city on fire] This expression, literally to **send into** the fire, occurs for the first time here, and is therefore a sign of the independent authorship of this book. See also ch. xx. 48.

9. *mountain*] τὴν ὀρεινήν, LXX., the very expression used by St Luke and translated "the hill country of Judaea." A large part of the territory of Judah was mountainous, and the hills round Hebron rose to a height of about 3000 feet. Dean Stanley (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 161) describes the physical features of the country, "the rounded hills, the broad valleys, the scanty vegetation, the wells in every valley, the vestiges of terraces, whether for corn or wine," as well as the ruins on the hill-tops, testifying to the former populousness of the territory.

the south] Two words are used in Hebrew to designate the *south*, the one signifying actual direction, the other having reference to the physical characteristics of the land. The latter (Negeb) is used here. The term signifies dryness or drought, and this (see Achsah's speech in v. 15) was the actual nature of the country. "For a few weeks late in the spring-time a smiling aspect is thrown over the broad downs, when the ground is reddened by the anemone in contrast with the soft white of the daisy and the deep yellow of the tulip and marigold. But this flush of beauty soon passes, and the permanent aspect of the country is not wild indeed, nor hideous, or frightfully desolate, but, as we may say, austerely plain; a tame, unpleasing aspect, not causing absolute discomfort while one is in it, but left without one lingering reminiscence

10—15. *Caleb's exploits and their results.*

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

of anything lovely, awful, or sublime." G. S. Drew, *Scripture Lands*, p. 6.

the valley] **low country**, margin. The word in the original is *Shephêlah*, and it is applied to the tract of undulating country that extended from the mountains to the coast. Its fertility made it a great contrast to the Negeb. Cf. for this word Deut. i. 7; Josh. x. 40, xii. 8. It is variously translated in the A.V.

10—15. Caleb's exploits and their results.

10. *And Judah went*] This expedition is related in Josh. xiv. 13—15, xv. 13—19. This passage is clearly a quotation from the book of Joshua. The verbal divergences are infinitesimal, while remarkable expressions, which occur nowhere else, are copied. Josephus, *Antiq.* v. 1, 2, regards this expedition as occurring after Joshua's death. But a consideration of Caleb's age (see Josh. xiv. 10), makes it almost certain that for "went" we should translate **had gone**, and regard this passage as referring to an earlier campaign. See note on *v.* 8.

Hebron] This city, standing at a height of 2,700 feet above the Mediterranean, a mountain fastness inhabited by tribes of such gigantic height and strength as to be pre-eminent even among the giant tribes of Canaan (Numb. xiii. 28, 33; Deut. ix. 2), might well call for the bravest and best of the Israelites to attempt its conquest. It was founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Numb. xiii. 22). When we first hear of it, Mamre the Amorite dwelt there (Gen. xiii. 18, xiv. 13). Yet the children of Heth, or Hittites, had possession of it a little later (Gen. xxiii.), while here it is in the hands of the Canaanites. As several of the various tribes of Palestine are mentioned in this chapter (*vv.* 4, 33, 34—36), we are precluded from supposing that the names are used loosely as synonyms. The place was a sacred one already to the Israelites, for not only had Abraham pitched his tent there, but he and Sarah were buried there. See beside the passages already quoted, Gen. xxv. 9, 10. It was celebrated in the after history of Israel as the place where David reigned before the capture of Jerusalem. Huge blocks of stone still remain to attest the strength of the "cities walled up to heaven" which the Israelites were enabled to capture, while the site of Abraham's sepulchre has been preserved to us by a chain of tradition the authenticity of which it is impossible to doubt. It was visited by the Prince of Wales and his *suite* in 1862. See Stanley, *Sermons in the East*, p. 141 sqq. It is now called the Haram, or enclosure, and is surrounded by a mosque.

Kirjath-arba] Or, *the city of Arba*. It might also mean the city of four, and the Rabbinical writers explain this by a tradition that the

And from thence he went against the inhabitants of 11
Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher.
And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh 12

four patriarchs Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their wives (see Gen. xxiii. 19, xxv. 9, xxxv. 29, xlix. 30, 31) were buried there. Also they say that four men of mark, Abraham, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, dwelt there. But Arba is explained in Josh. xiv. 15 to be "a great man among the Anakims," or as a more literal translation would put it, "*the greatest* man among the Anakim was he." Again in Josh. xv. 13 we are told that he was the father of Anak. For the curious mistranslation of the word man (Adam) in the Vulgate, followed by our Wiclif, in Josh. xiv. 15, see note there.

Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai] Cf. Josh. xv. 14. Josephus states that after the siege of Hebron many bodies of men of immense stature were found among the slain, and that the bones of some of them had been preserved until his day.

11. *Debir*] Also called Kirjath-sepher (the city of the book) and Kirjath-sannah (the city of the palm, or the city of the doctrine, cf. the word *Sunnites* among the Mohammedans) Josh. xv. 49. Debir has recently, and with great probability, been identified by Lieutenant Conder with Dhâheriyeh (*Quarterly Paper of Palestine Exploration Fund*, Jan. 1875). Other travellers, e.g. Ritter, had previously described it as a place of importance; and Wilson (*Lands of the Bible*, I. 351) remarks on the fact that the sites of five out of the ten cities mentioned in conjunction with Debir in Josh. xv. are found in the immediate neighbourhood. Other reasons for the identification are (1) that the main roads of the district appear to have met here, (2) that there are traces of ancient dwellings, and (3) that though in an arid district, there are springs of water (see *v.* 15) at no great distance. To which we may add (4) that the name (properly D'vîr) has not been altogether lost in the modern name.

Kirjath-sepher] See last note. The origin of this name, as of Kirjath-sannah, has been much disputed. But since recent discoveries have proved the Hittites, who inhabited some portion of Palestine, and who had (see note on last verse) evidently settled in this immediate neighbourhood, to have been an intelligent, cultivated, and powerful nation, there seems less reason than had previously been supposed for rejecting the theory that this town had been the headquarters of the culture of Palestine. The word D'vîr (oracle—see 1 Kings vi. 5, 19—22) may have some connection with the same idea. And Fürst (*Lex.* s. v.) says that *d'vir* in Phoenician signifies a *book*.

12. *And Caleb said*] The writer now leaves his general narrative and begins to quote the very words of Josh. xv. He evidently has had it in his mind before, but what the book of Joshua has distinctly assigned to Caleb is here described more generally as the work of the tribe to which he belonged. But this introduction of Caleb, without explanation, proves that the writer was aware of the fact that he con-

13 it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it:
14 and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came *to him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off *her* ass; and
15 Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto

ducted the expedition against Hebron. Caleb's origin is difficult to trace. He is called the Kenezite, or rather *Kenizzite*, in Josh. xiv. 6, 14, from which some have inferred that he was of Gentile origin (see the Bishop of Bath and Wells' article in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, and cf. Gen. xv. 19). It is difficult to unravel the perplexed genealogy of 1 Chron. ii., iv. But we are told (Exod. xii. 38) that "a mixed multitude" went up with the Israelites out of Egypt. Among them Kenites (*v.* 16 and ch. iv. 11) were certainly found, and possibly some of the Kenizzites, who were of kindred race, and the genealogy in 1 Chron. ii. and iv. is connected both with Kenites and Kenizzites. See 1 Chron. ii. 55, and iv. 13, 15. Then the appearance of all the tribe of Judah to plead the cause of Joshua's old comrade would suggest that some reason must have existed for their presence in support of his claim, as well as what is said in Josh. xiv. 14, which would seem to imply that this conduct was something especially meritorious on Caleb's part. See also the article on Caleb in Dean Plumptre's *Biblical Studies*. Also Josh. xv. 13.

to him will I give Achsah my daughter] Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 25; 1 Chron. xi. 6.

13. *Othniel the son of Kenaz*] See ch. iii. 9—11; also Josh. xv. 17. The Hebrew does not enable us to decide whether Othniel or Kenaz were Caleb's brother. Ewald is inclined to the former view (*History of Israel*, I. 251, cf. II. 286, note). As Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, the latter appears probable, but it is of course possible that the term son of Kenaz is equivalent to Kenizzite in Josh. xiv. 6, 14. In the genealogy of 1 Chron. ii., iv., the names Caleb and Kenaz appear to have been family names. For the construction, see Numb. x. 29; 2 Sam. xiii. 3, 32, &c. The family of Othniel was of importance in Israel down to the time of David. See 1 Chron. xxvii. 15, where his family and that of the Zarhites (*vv.* 11, 13) are mentioned, and cf. Josh. vii. 17.

14. *a field*] So it is in Josh. xv. 18. Here it is *the* field, i.e. the particular portion of land she ultimately obtained.

lighted] The word only occurs here and in the original passage in Josh. xv. and in ch. iv. 21 of the nail sinking (or crashing) down into Sisera's temples. It is impossible to say whether gradual or rapid motion is meant.

What wilt thou] Or, **what is the matter with thee**. Literally, *what to thee*. Achsah's conduct evidently caused surprise to Caleb. Most likely she suddenly flung herself from the ass and sunk on her knees in an imploring attitude.

him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

16. *The movements of the Kenites.*

And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah *into* the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the 16

15. *a blessing*] See Gen. xxxiii. 11; 1 Sam. xxv. 27; 2 Kings v. 15.

a south land] Literally, *a land of the dry region* (*Negeb*, see note on *v.* 9).

the upper springs and the nether springs] Six miles and a half north of Dhâhariyeh are found fourteen springs or pools on different levels, no doubt the upper and lower pools mentioned here. See Lieut. Conder's statement already quoted (note on *v.* 11).

16. The movements of the Kenites.

16. *the Kenite*] Cf. Gen. xv. 19; Numb. xxiv. 21; and see ch. iv. 11; 1 Sam. xv. 6, xxvii. 10, xxx. 29; 1 Chron. ii. 55.

Moses' father in law] Rather, **brother in law**. See note on ch. iv. 11. Cf. Numb. x. 29—32, where Hobab, Jethro's son, is called a *Midianite*, in agreement with the narrative in Exod. ii., iii. We learn from this passage that Hobab responded to Moses' appeal.

the city of palm trees] Jericho—see ch. iii. 13; Deut. xxxiv. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 15. No trace of the palm-grove now remains, but it has only gradually disappeared. It is said that its last vestiges might have been seen as late as the year 1838. Relics of it are sometimes washed up from the Dead Sea even now. The name Jericho (city of fragrance) was no doubt derived from its situation in the midst of the palms.

wilderness of Judah] Where John the Baptist preached (Matt. iii. 1). "It is a plateau of white chalk, 2000 feet lower than the watershed, and terminated on the east by cliffs which rise vertically from the Dead Sea shore to a height of about 2000 feet. The scenery is barren, and wild beyond all description. The chalky ridges are scored by innumerable torrents, and their narrow crests are separated by broad flat valleys. Peaks and knolls of fantastic forms rise suddenly from the swelling downs, and magnificent precipices of ruddy limestone stand up like fortress walls above the sea. Not a tree nor a spring is visible in the waste, and only the desert partridge and the ibex are found ranging the solitude." Conder, *Handbook to the Bible*, pp. 213, 214. It lay between the Hebron range of mountains and the Dead Sea.

south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

17—21. *Further prosecution of the expedition of Judah and Simeon.*

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed
18 it: and the name of the city was called Hormah. Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the

Arad] See Josh. xii. 14. Now Tell 'Arâd, about twenty miles south of Hebron. "A white crowned hill, with traces of ruins, a day's journey west of the south end of the Dead Sea." Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 11.

17—21. FURTHER PROSECUTION OF THE EXPEDITION OF JUDAH AND SIMEON.

17. *Zephath*] Supposed by most explorers to have retained its ancient name, and to be the present *Sebaita* in the midst of the Negeb. Robinson, however (*Biblical Researches*, III. 150), prefers Es-Sufah. Called Hormah first, because of the terrible defeat inflicted on the Israelites by the Amalekites (Numb. xiv. 45), and afterward because of the destruction of the Canaanites related in this passage and in Numb. xxi. 3. Hormah (see margin of Numb. xxi. 3) signifies *utter destruction*. See next note. Also Josh. xii. 14, xix. 4; 1 Sam. xxx. 30; 2 Chron. xiv. 10. The name Hormah only is used by Moses. Only here and in 2 Chron. xiv. 10, is the older name used.

utterly destroyed it] The word *cherem*, used of the destruction of Jericho and the other Canaanitish cities, originally means to *shut up* (whence our word *Harem*). Hence in the Hiphil or causative voice it comes to mean *cause to shut up*, thence to *consecrate*, and thence to *devote to utter destruction*, to *place under a ban*. From this word *Hormah* (see last note) is derived.

18. *Gaza*] The scene of one of Samson's greatest exploits. See ch. xvi. 3. One of the five lordships of the Philistines, Josh. xiii. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 17, 18. It had apparently not been captured in Joshua's time, see Josh. x. 41, xi. 22. As it appears to have been again in the hands of the Philistines in the time of Samson and Samuel (see passages just cited and ch. iii. 3), the Israelites could not have held it long. The LXX., however, which is followed by Josephus, inserts a "not" here, and continues it throughout the verse. This reading agrees better with what follows. Josh. xi. 22 seems to bear out this reading. See also ch. iii. 3. Gaza is sometimes called Azzah in Scripture (Deut. ii. 23; 1 Kings iv. 14; Jer. xxv. 20). It is now called *Ghazzeh*.

with the coast thereof] Literally, *and her border*. The word *coast* (French *côte*) from the Latin *costa*, a *rib* or *side*, had the same sense of

coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. And the 19
LORD was with Judah; and he drave out *the inhabitants of* the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron. And they 20
gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled

side as the French word now has. The Hebrew word is translated indifferently by *coast* and *border* in our version.

Askelon] More properly *Ashkelon*, known later as *Ascalon*, now *Askalan*. One of the five Philistine lordships (see passages cited above). It lay on the Philistine coast, about midway between Gaza and Ashdod. It is mentioned in later times (see Jer. xxv. 20, xlvii. 5, 7). It was famous in the history of the Crusades as having been besieged and taken by Richard I. "Within the walls and towers now standing Richard held his court." Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 257.

Ekron] This was also one of the five lordships of the Philistines. It soon returned under the hands of the Philistines. See 1 Sam. v. 10, vi. 17. It lay near what ultimately became the border of Judah, though it probably, like Gath, fell under Israelite dominion in the reigns of David and his immediate successors (1 Chron. xviii. 1).

19. *but could not drive*] Judah is the nominative to the verb here, not, as some objectors to the inspiration of Scripture have supposed, Jehovah. The successes of Judah are ascribed to Him who gave them. But his failures are his own. Had he had faith enough, no chariots of iron would have enabled the inhabitants of the valley to resist him. Cf. Josh. xi. 4—6, xvii. 16, 18. It is of course possible (see note on last verse) that Judah may have taken the cities of the 'Emek by a sudden assault, but have been unable to hold them.

valley] Here *'Emek*, generally a wide valley enclosed by hills, though sometimes it is used in a sense equivalent to *plain*. It seems as though it is here intended to signify the Shephêlah (see *v.* 9).

chariots of iron] These seem to have caused much dread to the Israelites. They seem even to have appalled the stout heart of Joshua (Josh. xi. 6). What these chariots were is uncertain. Scythe-chariots ("chaarys full of weepnes in manner of sithis," Wiclif) do not appear to have been known to the Egyptians, and Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* says that Cyrus introduced them from the Scythians. It is therefore possible that they were ordinary war-chariots such as we find described in the *Iliad*. See, for further information, Dr Cassel's note in *Lange's Commentary*, translated in Clark's Theological Library. Also the Article "Chariot" in the *Dictionary of the Bible*. The LXX. renders here most curiously ὅτι Ῥηχὰβ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς, leaving the word "chariots" untranslated, no doubt from the difficulty mentioned above.

20. *as Moses said*] See Numb. xiv. 24; Josh. xiv. 9. Caleb, in the latter passage, mentions circumstances which Moses has not recorded. The only satisfactory explanation of his words seems to be that the spies separated, and that Hebron was the place visited by Caleb. The text follows the narrative in Joshua.

21 thence the three sons of Anak. And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

22—26. *Capture of Bethel.*

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up *against*
23 Beth-el: and the LORD *was* with them. And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el. (Now the name of the city
24 before *was* Luz.) And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy.
25 And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let
26 go the man and all his family. And the man went *into* the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which *is* the name thereof unto this day.

the three sons of Anak] Their names are given in *v.* 10.

21. *did not drive out the Jebusites*] See *v.* 8. The only possible solution of the difficulty appears to be that suggested above, *v.* 8. The tribes of Judah and Simeon assaulted the city and set it on fire, but left the garrison to be dislodged from the citadel by the Benjamites, which they failed to do. In fact it was never thoroughly done. See 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 1 Kings ix. 20; Ezra ix. 1.

unto this day] We cannot absolutely conclude that the book of Judges was written before the time of David from this verse. See last note.

22—26. CAPTURE OF BETHEL.

22. *Beth-el*] Now Beitin. This town lies at the head of the ravine running up among the mountains from Jericho to Ai. It was on the borders of Ephraim and Benjamin. Here Abraham encamped "having Beth-el on the west and Ai on the east" (Gen. xii. 8). Here was Jacob's vision (Gen. xxviii. 19), whence its name, which, as we are here told, had formerly been Luz (Gen. xxxv. 6, xlviii. 3). It is not recorded as having been taken when Ai fell (Josh. viii. 28), though its inhabitants were engaged in the battle (Josh. viii. 17). Probably only a few of its men of war were left, and Joshua hastened on to the ceremony at Shechem described in the latter part of the same chapter.

24. *spies*] Literally, *watchers*.

26. *the land of the Hittites*] It is now discovered that the Hittites were a mighty nation ("the contemporary Egyptian inscriptions designate them as 'the great people,'" Brugsch, *Hist. Egypt*, II. 2), who

27—36. *The inaction of the remaining tribes.*

Neither did Manasseh drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth- 27
shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and

were for a long period the successful rivals of the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. The seat of their power was Carchemish, and they attained to a considerable degree of cultivation, as the sculptures and general remains recently discovered incontestibly prove. An interesting discovery has been made during the present year (1881). Lieut. Conder has just identified the sacred city of the Hittites. It has been found on the banks of a lake close by the river Orontes, just as it is depicted on the Karnak temple erected to commemorate its capture by Rameses II. The sculptor "has chiselled," says Brugsch (*Hist. Egypt*, II. 46), "in deep work on the stone, with a bold execution of the several parts, the procession of the warriors, the battle before Kadesh, the storming of the fortress, the overthrow of the enemy, and the camp life of the Egyptians."

27—36. THE INACTION OF THE REMAINING TRIBES.

27. *Beth-shean*] Later Scythopolis, now Beisan. This city stood in a noble situation on a bold bluff of limestone, surrounded by deep and almost inaccessible ravines—"a sort of Gibraltar on a small scale." See a vivid description of the prospect from the ruined site in Tristram, *Land of Israel*, pp. 501, 502. It was properly within the boundaries of Issachar, but had been assigned to Manasseh on account of the smallness of its own territory (Josh. xvii. 11).

and her towns] Literally, *daughters*, i.e. a group of smaller towns at no great distance from the capital of the district. See Josh. ix. 17, where the daughter cities seem to have been within a radius of about five miles.

Taanach] Sometimes Tanach, now *Tâ'nak* or *Ta'anik*. It is described by Bartlett (*Egypt and Palestine*, 476), as "the hill-spur of Ta'annuk." Generally coupled with Megiddo. These were also towns assigned to Manasseh out of Issachar and Asher. See Josh. xii. 21, xvii. 11; 1 Kings iv. 12. Taanach became a Levitical city, Josh. xxi. 25.

Dor] See Josh. xi. 2, xvii. 11. Now Dandora or Tantura. This city was once a strong place, and the seat of the trade in Phoenician dye, which was obtained from one or two species of shell-fish (the *murex trunculus* and the *helix ianthina*) and was famous in early times, as innumerable passages from ancient authors shew. Pliny gives a description of the fish from whence it was obtained in his *Natural History*, 9, 36. It stands "on a low mound near the sea" (Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 105), spoken of as the Napheth Dor (heights of Dor) in Josh. xi. 2.

Ibleam] See 2 Kings ix. 27.

her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.
28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.
29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.
30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among

Megiddo] This has generally been identified with Lejjun (the Latin Legio), but as a place called Mejedda has been found at the foot of Gilboa, and as the majority of places in Palestine retain their ancient names, the latter place is now thought to be the true site. Megiddo is a remarkable place in some respects. Beside being the place where Josiah met his death, it is mentioned under the name of Magedi in the lists of towns captured by Thothmes III., supposed by Brugsch and others to have been long anterior to Moses. It is mentioned also in a book of travels of the reign of Rameses II, also, according to high authority, before the Exodus. See *Records of the Past*, II. 106. And the writer of the book of the Revelation selects it, under the name of Armageddon (Har or Mount Megiddo) as the scene of the last great conflict in the world's history (Rev. xvi. 14, 16).

would dwell] i. e. **willed** to dwell. Cf. German *wollen*. Not *began*, as the Septuagint translates (the Chaldee has "left them to dwell"), for this, though grammatically admissible, would be historically false. "Whenever this word occurs, it seems necessary to take it as expressing *acquiescence in offered conditions*," Dr Cassel *in loc.* See Exod. ii. 21; *v.* 35 of this chapter, and ch. xvii. 11, where our version has "was content," i. e. with an offer. Also ch. xix. 6.

28. *they put the Canaanites to tribute*] See the similar passage in Josh. xvii. 13. This was what they were strictly forbidden to do (Exod. xxiii. 31—33; Deut. vii. 1—6, &c.) and the cause of all their misfortunes.

29. *Gezer*] See Josh. x. 33. It became a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 21; 1 Chron. vi. 67), but the Canaanites were allowed to dwell with the Levites (see Josh. xvi. 10). One of the most interesting results of the researches of the Palestine Exploration Fund has been the discovery at Tell-el-Jezer of the boundary stone of the city, with inscriptions in Greek and Hebrew. The fact of Greek being found on it shews that the boundary was placed there at a period subsequent to the Babylonian captivity. The city was captured by the king of Egypt (we are told—1 Kings ix. 16—that it was still inhabited by the Canaanites) and was restored to Solomon when he espoused Pharaoh's daughter. It was an important stronghold in the days of the Maccabees (1 Macc. ix. 52; 2 Macc. x. 32). It is there called Gazara.

30. *Kitron, Nahalol*] The former, perhaps, the same as Kattath and the latter certainly the same as Nahallal in Josh. xix. 15. See also

them, and became tributaries. Neither did Asher drive out 31
the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor
of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of
Rehob: but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the 32
inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.
Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth- 33
shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt

Josh. xxi. 35, whence we learn that Nahalol was a Levitical city. The places have not been identified. The Jerusalem Talmud reads Tzippori for Kitron, and this has been identified with Seffurieh. On what authority this reading is based does not appear. The LXX. has Κεττρών.

31. *Accho*] Now St Jean d'Acre, a town more famous in modern than in ancient history. It is situated about ten miles north of Mount Carmel, and was known as Ptolemais in Roman times, having been rebuilt by one of the Ptolemies during their supremacy in Palestine (1 Macc. v. 15, 22, x. 1, &c. See also Acts xxi. 7). It was taken by Baldwin in the first crusade, A.D. 1104, retaken by Saladin 1187. Richard I. and his allies retook it four years later, and about forty years later still it became the seat of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Edward I. defended it with success, but it finally fell into the hands of the infidels in 1291, when 60,000 Christians were either killed or sold for slaves, and the great Christian order of Knights Templar was almost entirely destroyed. The attack on Acre by Napoleon in 1799, repulsed by Sir Sidney Smith with the aid of a few English sailors, brings its interest for Englishmen down to a comparatively recent period.

Zidon] Called Great Zidon in Josh. xi. 8. The city, now called Saida, retains but little of the commercial importance of the renowned Phoenician city, in Homer's time the home of the arts, the centre of Phoenician civilization. The remains of various ages are to be seen there, from the massive stone-work of the ancient Phoenicians to the remains of Roman temples and Mohammedan mosques. See Kenrick, *Phoenicia*, p. 17 sqq.; Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, III. 415; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 36 sqq., and almost any work of travel in Palestine.

Ahlab] Afterwards *Giscala*, now el-Jish, a considerable distance from the sea, and N.W. of the Sea of Galilee.

Achzib] The Greek Ecdippa, now ez-Zib, about 10 miles north of Accho.

Aphik] Most probably the Aphek of Josh. xiii. 4, xix. 30. If so, it was the place where the Syrian Aphrodite was worshipped, and where Thammuz, the Syrian Adonis, was yearly lamented. See Ezek. viii. 14. The ruins of the temple, so famed for its licentious worship, may still be seen at *Afka*, on the north-west slopes of Lebanon. They are described by Tristram, *Bible Lands*, p. 307, as "magnificent ruins," in "a spot of strange wildness and beauty," and as lying beyond Beirût or Beyrout. See also Kenrick, *Phoenicia*, pp. 310, 311.

Rehob] See Josh. xix. 28. Also ch. xviii. 28.

33. *Beth-shemesh*] The house of the sun, i.e. the place where the

among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath
34 became tributaries unto them. And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not
35 suffer them to come down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim:

sun was worshipped. See Josh. xix. 38. Not to be confounded with Beth-shemesh, the Levitical city, in the tribe of Judah (see Josh. xv. 10, xxi. 16; 1 Sam. vi. 13—20).

34. *the Amorites*] The tribe of Dan occupied a small piece of territory taken out of the north-west of the tribe of Judah. It was not sufficient for them (see Josh. xix. 47, and Judg. xviii. 1). We find from this passage that the Shephêlah here was in the hands of the Amorites. The word Amorite is supposed by Ewald, Fürst, and Gesenius to mean *highlander*. Amir in Is. xvii. 9 means the topmost part of a tree. The analogy of the kindred Semitic tongues is in favour of this. Thus *Amori* means in Syriac a hero, and *Emir* in Arabic a ruler. See note on ch. iii. 5. If here they had descended from their mountain fastnesses and occupied the Shephêlah, we must not forget that Sihon occupied a mountain district (Numb. xxi. 24); that Maaleh-akrabbim (see note below) was in the midst of a mountain district. In Gen. xiv. 7 we find them in the mountainous country near En-gedi (cf. 2 Chron. xx. 2), and the mountains of Hebron are inhabited by Mamre the Amorite (Gen. xiii. 18, xiv. 13).

forced] Literally *crushed*, *arctavit*, Vulg. The word is used of Balaam's foot, crushed by the ass against the wall, Numb. xxii. 25. Hence the insufficiency of the Danite territory to contain them.

valley] *Emek*, in the original. See note on *v.* 19.

35. *would dwell*] See note on *v.* 27.

in mount Heres] Mount Heres (Heb. *Har-cheres*, literally **sun-mountain**) has been supposed by some to be identical with Ir-shemesh (city of the sun) in Josh. xix. 41. They have gone so far as to identify it with Beth-shemesh (house of the sun), the present *Ain-Shems*. But this is impossible, as Beth-shemesh was in Judah (Josh. xv. 10), and a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 16). No doubt as these cities were close to the borders of Dan and Judah, there may have been a temple of the sun in one place and a city in the immediate vicinity, and that the dividing line of the two tribes fell between them. That Har-cheres was a mountain district so named from its proximity to these places appears very probable. The LXX. translates "potsherd-mount," *cheres* signifying also a potsherd. See also Is. xix. 18.

Aijalon, Shaalbim] The former is now Yâlo. Called also Ajalon, Josh. x. 12. This was also a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 24). Shaalbim meets us in Josh. xix. 42 as Shaalabbin, where, however, the difference is almost entirely in the Masoretic pointing, and in the later form of the Hebrew plural. The LXX. renders "in which" (i.e. in Mount Heres) "are the bears and the foxes." Ajalon most likely means *deer-*

yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. And the coast of the Amorites 36
was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward,

CHAP. II. 1—5. *The message of Jehovah and the repentance of the people.*

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to 2
Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and

(not *bear*) ground, and Shaalbim *fox*-city, or *jackal*-city. See note on ch. xv. 4.

the house of Joseph] The most powerful of the tribes, who seem here to have come to the assistance of their Danite brethren.

36. *The coast of the Amorites*] See note on *v.* 18. This must have been a distinct kingdom from that of Sihon, separated from it by the kingdoms of Moab and Ammon. The historian clearly refers here to the Amorite border before the invasion.

going up to Akrabbim] Called "Maaleh-acrabbim" in Josh. xv. 3, and "the ascent of Akrabbim" in Numb. xxxiv. 4. Akrabbim signifies scorpions (Wiclif translates "the stiynge up of Scorpioun"), and the ascent in question has been identified by some with the Wady-es-Suweirah, where, as De Saulcy tells us, scorpions may still be found under almost every pebble (Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 113). But nothing is positively established beyond the certainty that it was one of the numerous mountain passes at the south-western extremity of the Dead Sea.

the rock] Supposed by many expositors to be the city of Petra, which also signifies "the rock." Wiclif translates by "Petra," following the Vulgate. From Numb. xxxiv. we learn, apparently, that Maaleh-akrabbim was at the north end of the desert of Zin, and that the boundary of the Israelites ran southward along that desert unto its southern extremity at Kadesh. Now Petra, which lies at the foot of Mount Hor, is close by the desert of Zin, and there seems therefore no reason to doubt that "the rock" is Petra (see 2 Kings xiv. 7, where Selah is "the rock"), and that the Amorite border crossed the great depression called the Ghor, which extended from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the eastern branch of the Red Sea. The word "upward," which has been held by some commentators to mean "northward," must be taken in its literal meaning, "upward" from the Ghor into the mountain district. See also Numb. xxxiv. 7, 8.

CH. II. 1—5. THE MESSAGE OF JEHOVAH AND THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE.

1. *an angel*] Such is the almost universal use of the word in Holy Scripture. Hag. i. 13 is an exception, and some commentators would

have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with
2 you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of

incorrectly include Mal. iii. 1 among the exceptions. See also ch. xi. 11, where it means *messenger*. It is used apparently of a priest in Eccl. v. 6, as God's mouth-piece, cf. Mal. ii. 7; and of Israel (Is. xlii. 19) as one sent to proclaim God's truth, but faithless to his trust. The only ground for doubting its meaning here is that the messenger is said to have come from Gilgal, which is inexplicable in the case of an angel. Keil's explanation that the "Captain of the Lord's host" appeared to Joshua at Gilgal (Josh. v. 13) is unsatisfactory for two reasons, (1) that he did *not* appear to Joshua at Gilgal but in the immediate vicinity of Jericho, as the Hebrew text clearly implies, and (2) that he must in that case have been regarded in the sacred writer's mind as having abode there ever since, which for many reasons is hardly probable, and especially since the tabernacle was (Josh. xviii. 1) set up at Shiloh. We are thus reduced to a balance of probabilities, whether it were more likely that the word should have been used here in an unusual sense, or that the angel of the Lord could have been said to "come up from Gilgal." The further statement of Keil that no prophet ever so thoroughly identifies himself with his message as this, that he always begins with "thus saith Jehovah" (cf. ch. vi. 8), does not seem to be exactly accurate. Isaiah makes very little use of this formula, and many of the utterances of the other prophets do not commence with it. The Targum regards the messenger as a prophet, while Kimchi and Drusius tell us the majority of the Rabbis suppose the speaker to have been Phinehas.

from Gilgal] or **the Gilgal**. It appears impossible to doubt that two places at least must have been the camping place of the Israelites in Joshua's time, the first the modern Jiljûlieh, close by Jericho; the second, now Jiljilia, near Bethel. See note on Josh. ix. 6. From the double meaning of a circular spot and that of rolling (see Josh. v. 9), it came to be the name given to the early Israelite encampments. It is impossible to say which of these two places is meant here.

to Bochim] Of Bochim, which (see margin of *v.* 5) signifies *weepers*, nothing more is known.

I made you to go] The use of the Hebrew imperfect here has been a difficulty to commentators. The LXX. and Vulgate solve it by translating it by the ordinary past tense. Possibly the tense, which refers ordinarily to unfinished action, here implies that God's intention in bringing them out of Egypt was to settle them securely in Canaan, and that this intention had been frustrated by their disobedience, while the use of the perfect in "and I have said" implies that God's word, once uttered, was irrevocable.

and I said] Gen. xvii. 7.

2. *no league*] See Exod. xxiii. 32; Deut. vii. 2, 3; Josh. ix. 7, xxiii. 12. Literally, *covenant*.

this land; you shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I 3
also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of 4
the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lift up their voice, and wept. And they 5
called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

6—10. *The Condition of Israel under Joshua.*

And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of 6
Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess

throw down their altars] A quotation from Exod. xxxiv. 13; Deut. vii. 5, xii. 3. Better, to **break** down. The LXX. adds "break to pieces their images," from Exod. xxxiv., and translates the word here used by "dig down." See ch. ix. 45.

why have ye done this?] Or, **what is this that ye have done?**

3. as thorns] These words are added by our translators, with some of the Rabbis, from Num. xxxiii. 55; Josh. xxiii. 13. But the text does not require it, and the LXX. supplies no such word. But the LXX. read *tzar* for *tzad* here, the Hebrew letters answering to *r* and *d* being very much alike. In that case the proper translation would be "as *adversaries*," instead of "in your sides." This is also the reading of the Chaldee paraphrase and the Vulgate.

5. *they sacrificed there unto the Lord*] Some have contended that Bochim must have been some particular spot at Shiloh. But though the ordinary ritual of the Law could only be performed at Shiloh, it does not appear that special sacrifices on special occasions could not be offered elsewhere. See 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14, where Samuel does not appear to have blamed Saul for offering a sacrifice at that particular place, but for having taken upon him the priest's, or more strictly, in this case, the Prophet-Levite's office. Cf. also ch. xi. 11, note.

6—10. THE CONDITION OF ISRAEL UNDER JOSHUA.

6. *And when Joshua had let*] The absence of a pluperfect tense in Hebrew has led to some discussion whether this verse is to be regarded as referring to events before or after those recorded in the last five verses. But the statement of *v.* 10 disposes of the difficulty, and proves that what has been stated above took place some time after Joshua's death. This section is clearly a quotation from the book of Joshua, and is intended (1) to connect the following history with that in the book of Joshua, and (2) to mark the contrast between Israel in his days, and Israel in after years.

7 the land. And the people served the LORD all the days
of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived
Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that
8 he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant
9 of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And
they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-
heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the
hill Gaash.
10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their
fathers: and there arose another generation after them,
which knew not the LORD, nor yet not the works which he
had done for Israel.

11—23. *Israel's transgression after Joshua's death.*

11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of

7. *outlived*] Translated *overlived* in Josh. xxiv. 31. Lit., as marg. *prolonged* their *days after*.

great] This word is not found in the parallel passage in Joshua. It is not unimportant to discover why. The answer is that in the book of Joshua, written possibly even before the apostasy of Israel recorded in ch. iii., there is no thought of such a rebellion against God as this book records; but here, where the author is proceeding to relate the backslidings of Israel, the word is designedly introduced to mark his sense of the grievousness of their sin.

9. *Timnath-heres*] Called Timnath-serah in Josh. xxiv. 30. The LXX. has Timnath-serah here. But the reading Timnath-heres (Timnath *of the sun*), is an early one. From it the Rabbinical tradition has arisen that he at whose word the sun stood still, had a representation of the sun upon his sepulchre, and hence the name. But it is probable that the letters were transposed by an early copyist. Timnath-serah has been identified with the modern *Tibneh*, among the mountains of Ephraim, where there are some remarkable rock-hewn tombs. But Jewish tradition fixes the site at *Kefr Haris*, and Jewish tradition, which has preserved Abraham's sepulchre and Jacob's well, has been thought by the majority to be a safe guide here. Of the hill Gaash nothing is known, save its mention in 2 Sam. xxiii. 30, and 1 Chron. xi. 32.

11—23. ISRAEL'S TRANSGRESSION AFTER JOSHUA'S DEATH.

11. *evil*] The original is stronger, **the** evil, i. e., either the evil which brought upon them the troubles related in this book, or rather by way of emphasis, "that which was evil," as it is often rendered in the A. V.

the LORD, and served Baalim: and they forsook the LORD 12
God of their fathers, which brought them out of the
land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of
the people that *were* round about them, and bowed them-

Baalim] Literally, *lords*. Either (1) as a *pluralis excellentiae*, like Elohim, or (2) with Drusius, a general name for all the Baals of Syria who were worshipped under various names (perhaps as Lenormant and Bertheau suggest, from being "secondary divinities, emanating from the substance of the deity and mere personifications of his attributes") such as Baal-gad, Baal-hermon, Dagon of the Philistines, Melkarth of Tyre, Moloch and Milcom of the Ammonites, Chemosh of Moab and the like (ch. x. 6, 1 Kings xi. 5, 7). The number of the places to which the word Baal was prefixed shews the universality of the worship in Palestine before Joshua. Various opinions have been held concerning the attributes of Baal. Keil says (1) that he was "a sun-god, and as such the vehicle and source of physical life and of the generative and productive powers of nature." The learned Movers (*Die Phönizier*, I. 190) regards him (2) as having united in himself the characteristics of the sun-god, Mars and Saturn, i.e. "the engendering, preserving, and destructive principles." The early Assyrian worship separates the worship of Bel from that of Samas the sun-god (see Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, II.). And such words as Beth-shemesh, Ir-shemesh, Kir-heres and perhaps Timnath-heres (but see last note) imply that the sun was worshipped separately in Palestine. But, however this may be, one thing is certain, that the worship of Baal was a grossly licentious worship, fatal to the morals of all who took part in it, and therefore rightly an abomination in the eyes of the Jews.

12. *and they forsook*] Cf. Deut. xxxi. 16, 17. "The securitie of any people is the cause of their corruption; standing waters soone grow noysome. Whiles they were exercised with warre, how scrupulous were they of the least intimation of idolatry? the newes of a bare altar beyond Jordan (Josh. xxii.) drew them together for a revenge, now they are at peace with their enemies they are at variance with God: It is both hard and happy not to be the worse with liberty; The sedentary life is most subject to diseases." Bp. Hall, *Contemplations*, (Ed. 1617). So also Juvenal, *Sat.* VI. 292:

> "Nunc patimur longae pacis mala. Saevior armis
> Luxuria incubuit victumque ulciscitur orbem."

And Tennyson, *Maud*, VI. 5:

> "It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill."

The Lord God of their fathers] "The Lord" in this passage is *Jehovah* in the original, thus contrasting the name of the God of Israel with the name of the Phœnician deity. Render, **Jehovah, the God of their fathers.**

13 selves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And
they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.
14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he
delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them,
and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round
about, so that they could not any longer stand before their
15 enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the
LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and

provoked the Lord to anger] We must never lose sight of the fact that this was no mere contention for forms of worship, but that the most frightful moral contamination clung to the worship of Phœnicia and Syria. Lenormant (*Ancient History of the East*, II. 223) refers to its gloomy and repulsive character, issuing as it did in the cruel practice of human sacrifices. See also Levit. xviii. 24—28.

13. *Ashtaroth*] This goddess, the Assyrian Ishtar, the Syrian Astarte, the Greek *aster*, and our *star* (though Canon Rawlinson denies the connection of the Semitic and Aryan roots here) seems to have combined the conception of the Greek Hera, Artemis and Aphrodite, and was worshipped both as the moon-goddess and as Venus. She was usually represented with a crescent, which might have denoted either, since the phases of Venus (Sayce, *Babylonian Literature*, pp. 50—56) were known to Chaldean astronomers. Numbers of altars have been discovered, especially lately, among the Hittite remains which are now so frequently brought to light. One is in the Fitzwilliam museum at Cambridge, with a male figure, representing Baal, on one side, and a female figure with a crescent, representing Ashtaroth, on the other. Her worship was that of "the second nature-godhead which was honoured as the female principle in conjunction with Baal the male principle" (Bertheau). Under all three characters of Baal (see note above) he was allied with a female principle, the Astarte of Syria, who herself appears in various forms, as has been already stated. This conjunction of male and female deities was also a characteristic of the ancient Chaldean and Assyrian worship. See Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*. The worship of Astarte, originally pure, gradually assumed the grossest possible character, and one of its chief seats was Aphek or Aphik (ch. i. 31). The tablets of Rameses II. recording his wars with the Hittites, mention *Astert* as one of their deities.

14. *spoilers*] This word, which occurs first in this passage, is a mark of independent authorship. See Introduction. Also 2 Kings xvii. 20.

sold them] This term represents the absolute giving up into the hands of their enemies. It is no doubt derived from the idea of selling a slave. The converse process is *redemption*. The expression is frequently used in this book, and occurs elsewhere in Deut. xxxii. 30; 1 Sam. xii. 9. Cf. also 1 Kings xxi. 20; 2 Kings xvii. 17.

15. *as the Lord had said*] In Levit. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., xxix.

as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which 16 delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they 17 went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up 18 judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the

were greatly distressed] Lit. *were in great straits*, as in 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, cf. Gen. xxxii. 7; 1 Sam. xxx. 6. The word in the original signifies to be *narrow*, hence to be pent up, or pressed down.

16. *judges*] *Shophetim*, from a word related to *shebet*, or *shevet*, a *staff* or *rod* (the English *shaft*), hence a *tribe*. Some think the word is derived from the idea of setting upright, like the German *richten* (whence *Richter*, judges). Some, though with less probability, derive it from the staff of office borne by the judge (cf. Hom., *Iliad*, I. 234; XVIII. 505). The Carthaginian term *suffetes* is kindred to the Hebrew *shophet*. For this and for their office, see Introduction.

17. *And yet*] Lit. *and also*. The meaning is that they would not listen even to the judge who had delivered them. So the LXX. and Vulgate.

went a whoring] This expression must not be understood only of the spiritual sin of leaving the God to whom they had been espoused (see Jer. ii. 2; Ezek. xvi.), but literally also. See Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16 as well as notes on *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* and the narrative in Numb. xxv.

bowed themselves] Or *prostrated themselves*, probably touching the ground with the forehead, as Eastern nations do still at their devotions. The word is most frequently found in connection with another verb, "and they bowed the head and worshipped," the word translated "worshipped" being the one used here. With this whole passage compare Ps. cvi. 34—45.

obeying] Lit., *to hearken to*.

but they did not so] There is no *but* in the original. The words "they did not so" or "thus," are in close connection with what precedes; "they turned in haste from the way in which their fathers walked, to hearken unto the commandments of the Lord: they did not thus."

18. *the Lord was with the judge*] Nothing great was done, according to the writers of the Old Testament, but by God's help (see Deut. viii. 17; Ps. xliv. 3). Even the artistic skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab, who prepared the "cunning work" for the tabernacle, was the result of God's spirit dwelling in them (Ex. xxviii. 3, xxxi. 3, xxxv. 31). This is as true now as it ever was, in spite of man's frequent misuse of God's gifts.

judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings
by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.
19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they
returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers,
in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down
unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor
20 from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was
hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people
hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their
21 fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will
not henceforth drive out any from before them of the
22 nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them
I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the
LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not.
23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them

it repented the Lord] This is one of the many instances of condescension to the imperfection of human speech which are to be found in the Scriptures. See Gen. vi. 6; Jonah iii. 10, &c. Strictly speaking, God never repents. His nature is unchangeable (Numb. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29; James i. 17). But his attitude to man is relatively changed when man turns to him, as is the case here. Therefore the change of relations between God and the sinner when the latter forsakes his sin, is not inaptly described by the figure in the text.

vexed them] This is one of the phrases which are almost peculiar to the book of Judges, and which occurs for the first time here. It seems to have the notion of thrusting violently or stamping upon.

19. *when the judge was dead*] "How powerfull the presence of one good man is in a Church or State, is best found in his losse." Bp. Hall.

ceased not] Lit. *caused not to fall*, or, as marg., *let nothing fall.*

stubborn] Lit. *hard*. It is the expression translated *stiff*-necked in Exod. xxxii. 9, xxxiii. 3; Deut. ix. 6, 13.

20. *people*. Rather, **nation**. See the translation in *v.* 23. It is the less familiar of the two prose words for *people* in Hebrew. It is the term used for the Gentiles "the nations." Another word (*'am*) is used when the "people of the Lord" are spoken of.

21. *henceforth*] Or, *any more*. Heb. *I will not add.*

drive out] See Josh. xxiii. 13.

left when he died] See ch. iii. 1—3, and Josh. xiii. 1—6.

23. *left*] Heb. *caused to remain*, or *rest*. It was never God's intention to deliver these nations into the hand of Israel at once. See Deut. vii. 22. But these nations were used by God as a test of Israel's steadfastness in resisting the seductive temptations to which a residence in the midst of Canaanitish worship exposed them.

out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

CHAP. III. 1—7. *The influence of the heathen nations remaining in Canaan.*

Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, to 3
prove Israel by them, *even* as many *of Israel* as had not
known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of 2
the children of Israel might know, to teach them war,
at the least such as before knew nothing thereof: *namely*, 3
five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the

CH. III. 1—7. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HEATHEN NATIONS REMAINING IN CANAAN.

1. *left*] See last note.

as many of Israel *as had not known*] See ch. ii. 10.

2. *might know*] This construction is elliptical. The translation is "that the children of Israel might know—to teach them (i. e. that they might be taught)—war, at least those who before had not known them," i. e. wars. The Vulgate gives the sense well, "ut postea discerent filii eorum certare cum hostibus et habere consuetudinem praeliandi." Bertheau, however, translates "that the Lord might know the children of Israel to teach them war." This verse is not contradictory to ch. ii. 22, 23. War was a necessity to the children of Israel if they were to retain their possession of Palestine in the face of the three great military monarchies, the Egyptian, the Assyrian and the Hittite, which bordered on them. As they must necessarily be able to retain their possessions by the sword, it might be very reasonably considered that one valuable result of the presence of the Canaanite and other tribes in Palestine was to train the Israelites in warlike exercises.

at the least] This is the same word as that translated "only" above.

thereof] i.e., as the Hebrew shews, the wars of Canaan.

3. *five lords*] The Hebrew word *seren*, here used, is applied exclusively to the Philistines. Its precise meaning is doubtful (the LXX. renders it *satrapies*), but it shews that at this early period the Philistines, like the Gibeonites (Josh. x. 2), were not under a kingly government, as they were in the days of Saul and David (1 Sam. xxi. 10). The five lordships of the Philistines were Gath, Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron. See Josh. xiii. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 17.

Philistines] This people was of Egyptian origin (Gen. x. 14; Deut. ii. 23; 1 Chron. i. 12). They were closely related to the Caphtorim, who were, as Ewald and Hitzig believe, Cretans. Winer (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v.) supposes these last to have come over at an early period and dispossessed the Canaanitish aborigines, the Avim or Avvim. These writers (see also Ritter's *Geography of Palestine*, III. 278), believe the

Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.
4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

Cherethites and Pelethites who, with the Gittites, formed David's body-guard (2 Sam. xv. 18) to have been Cretans and Philistines. If this be the case, we have an additional illustration of the kinship of these two peoples. And that it is not altogether improbable we may infer from 1 Sam. xxx. 14; Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 4, 5, as well as from the fact that Ittai, a Gittite, or native of Gath, was one of David's trustiest soldiers (2 Sam. xv. 19, 21). So also was Uriah the Hittite, 2 Sam. xi. 3. For a more detailed account of the Philistines see the Commentary on 1 Samuel in this series, Appendix, Note IV.

Hivites] Or rather *Hivvites*, inhabitants of villages. See note on Perizzites, ch. i. 4. This tribe were to be found in the extreme north (cf. also Josh. xi. 3) at Gibeon (Josh. xi. 19), and at Shechem in the days of Jacob (Gen. xxxiv. 2).

in mount Lebanon] The range of mountains in the extreme north of Palestine, famed to this day for their renowned cedar-groves.

from mount Baal-hermon] The LXX. read "mount Hermon," but see 1 Chron. v. 23. Lenormant supposes Hermon to have received this name as one of the places where Baal was worshipped. See notes on ch. ii. 11, xx. 33.

Hermon] Called Sirion and Shenir (Deut. iii. 9; 1 Chron. v. 23; Ps. xxix. 6; Cant. iv. 8); also Sion—not to be confounded with the more famous Zion, which is differently spelt—in Deut. iv. 48. This magnificent mountain, the highest in Palestine, and visible from nearly every part of the Holy Land (see Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 609, Thomson, *Land and the Book*, p. 2, Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 395), forms the southern extremity of the Anti-Lebanon range, which runs parallel to the Lebanon range in a north-easterly direction. It rises to a height of 9,200 feet and is covered with perpetual snow.

the entering in of Hamath] See Numb. xxxiv. 8; Josh. xiii. 5. This was the border of Israel at the time of its highest prosperity (1 Kings viii. 65; 2 Kings xiv. 25). The expression refers to the northern extremity of the great depression between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon range known as the Buk'eia, or Coele Syria, spoken of by Van de Velde as "an entrance formed by nature itself." See also Robinson, *Researches in Palestine*, Appendix II., and *Later Biblical Researches*, sec. 12. Perhaps the most accurate explanation of the meaning of the phrase would be "up to the mouth of the valley which opens out upon Hamath," which stood, not *in* the valley, but on the Orontes, some fifty miles north of its entrance.

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, 5
Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and 6
gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.
And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, 7
and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

5. *Canaanites*] The inference from these words is that these were not genealogical, but geographical appellations. The inhabitants of Canaan seem to have been a congeries of various races, who adopted a common Semitic language, and were attracted to the country (1) by the commercial facilities afforded by its sea-coast, (2) by the fertility of its lowland districts, and (3) by the strength of its mountain fastnesses. Such a people (see Rawlinson, *Historical Illustrations of the O. T.*, p. 27), the ancient Babylonians seem also to have been, though the phenomena presented by their language are not precisely identical. Peaceful in their habits, and enervated by luxury, the Canaanites desired only to dwell safely in the pursuit of agriculture and commerce. The word Canaanite signifies *lowlander*, Amorite *highlander*, Perizzite *dweller in the open country*, Hivite *dweller in villages*, Jebusite probably *thresher*. The Hittites alone seem to have preserved their national designation, as emigrants from an important Turanian kingdom which existed outside the limits of Palestine. See note on ch. i. 4. Also Movers *Die Phönizier*, II. 1. 3. Brugsch, *Hist. Egypt*, II. 3.

6. *And they took their daughters*] The sacred writers are very careful to point out the evil of marriages with unbelievers. See Gen. xxiv. 3, xxvi. 35, xxvii. 46; Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3, 4; 1 Kings xvi. 31; 2 Chron. xviii. 1 (with which compare xix. 2, xxi. 6, xxii. 10, 12).

7. *the groves*] So the LXX. and Vulgate. Heb. *Asheroth*. This is not the same word as Ashtaroth. It begins with Aleph not 'Ain. They were usually wooden pillars, as is shewn by the fact that they were often cut down and burned. See 2 Kings xxiii. 6, 15. Also Deut. xii. 3. The stone pillars of Baal were on the contrary said to be "broken down." See Exod. xxxiv. 13; Deut. vii. 5, &c. Some, as Bertheau and Hengstenberg, have held that the Asherah was a wooden image or symbol of Astarte. But the learned historian of Phoenicia, Movers (*Phönizier*, I. 560) holds Asherah to have been a totally different goddess to Ashtaroth and remarks that Scripture itself distinguishes between them. Gesenius supposes, from the connection of the word with the Hebrew Asher, happiness, that she was the goddess of fortune. Movers, however, imagines that the name was derived from the idea of standing upright, and refers to the Artemis Orthosia of Herodotus, IV. 87. The narrative of ch. vi. 25—30 shews that "grove" cannot be the correct translation. It would have been impossible for Gideon unaided to have *cut down a grove* in a single night, or, having attempted to do so, to have eluded discovery.

8—11. *The oppression by Chushan-rishathaim.*

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel,
and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim
king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served
9 Chushan-rishathaim eight years. And when the children
of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a de-
liverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even*
10 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And
the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel,

8—11. THE OPPRESSION BY CHUSHAN-RISHATHAIM.

8. *sold them*] See note on ch. ii. 14.

Chushan-rishathaim] Literally *Cush* (or Chushan, Hab. iii. 7) *of double wickedness*. The Targum translates "Chushan the wicked, king of Syria on Euphrates" and the Syriac and Arabic versions give a similar rendering. But the use of the dual in the case of an abstract noun is unknown in Hebrew. Rishathaim must therefore be a proper name. See next note. It has been conjectured (Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, II. 61) that this monarch is identical with Asshur-ris-ilim the "powerful king, subduer of rebellious countries" as he is called in Assyrian inscriptions. But there are two objections to this identification; (1) that, as Hitzig observes, the name is clearly Turanian and (2) that *Chushan-Rishathaim* flourished about B.C. 1400, i.e. about the period of the fall of the early Turanian monarchy which (Gen. x. 6—10, cf. Rawlinson, *Anc. Mon.*, ch. 3, Sayce, *Babyl. Lit.*, p. 6, and Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, ch. 27) existed before the rise of the Semitic kingdom whose seat (Gen. x. 11, 22) was Nineveh; whereas Asshur-ris-ilim is supposed to have reigned about 1150 B.C.

Mesopotamia] Heb. *Aram-naharaim*, i.e. *Syria of the two rivers*, that is, the district between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

9. *a deliverer*] Or, as marg. *saviour*, LXX. σωτήρ. This passage must have been recalled to the mind of every Hellenistic Jew by Acts xiii. 23.

Othniel] Supposing Othniel to have been twenty-five years old when he took Kirjath-sepher (see note on ch. i. 8), if we count twenty years from that time to the invasion of Chushan-rishathaim, and the eight years mentioned in this verse, Othniel would by this time have been but fifty-three. And supposing him to have lived through the whole of the subsequent forty years (*v.* 11) he would not have been more than ninety-three at his death.

10. *And the spirit of the Lord*] So ch. vi. 34, xi. 29, xiii. 25, xiv. 6, 19. The Targum renders "the Spirit of prophecy from before the Lord." Joshua is described in Numb. xxvii. 18 as "a man in whom was the Spirit." See note above, ch. ii. 18: "This gift, like every other, has faith as its foundation. Yet human weakness is not thereby excluded." Hengstenberg. It is remarkable that the historian does not ascribe the conduct of Ehud and Jael to His inspiration, though the deliverance by Ehud is of course so ascribed. See notes below.

and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. And the land 11
had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

12—30. *The servitude under Moab, and deliverance by Ehud.*

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of 12
the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children 13
of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. So the children of Israel 14
served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when 15

and he judged Israel] The functions of the judge seem to be described here in accordance with the idea of *righting what was wrong* in any way (cf. the German *richter*). Some think that what is meant is that Othniel wrought out a moral reformation before he went out to war. But this does not seem to be borne out by the other passages in this book where the expression is used.

and the Lord delivered] Josephus states that Othniel (whom he calls Kenaz) accomplished this deliverance by collecting a band of resolute men and surprising the king's guard.

12—30. THE SERVITUDE UNDER MOAB, AND DELIVERANCE BY EHUD.

13. *the children of Ammon*] These, as they originally were very near akin (Gen. xix. 37, 38), and their territories lay close together, would naturally have been closely allied in policy and war. See also ch. xi. 13—16, 25, 27, and notes.

Amalek] Amalek is mentioned in conjunction with Ammon in Ps. lxxxiii. 7. They were specially regarded as enemies to Israel (see Exod. xvii. 16). Their territory lay in the Sinaitic peninsula, while that of the Moabites lay to the northward of it, east of the Dead Sea, and the Ammonites lay further north still. After Saul's great campaign, which almost exterminated them (1 Sam. xv.), and which he prosecuted (1 Sam. xv. 7) to the borders of Egypt, we hear very little of them in history. They appear once, still warring against Israel, in the later reigns (1 Chron. iv. 43).

the city of palm trees] See ch. i. 16. Though Jericho was destroyed, Eglon might have constructed a fortification among the ruins.

15. *But when the children of Israel cried*] Or, *and* the children of Israel cried.

the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent
16 a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and
17 he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and
18 Eglon *was* a very fat man. And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the
19 present. But he himself turned again from the quarries that

the Lord raised] "The same hand that raised up Eglon against Israel (*v.* 12) raised up also Ehud for Israel, against Eglon." Bp Hall.

deliverer] As above, *v.* 9, "God stirred up and strengthened Ehud for the delivery of Israel. But the choice of means was left to himself." Hengstenberg. See also note on *v.* 10.

lefthanded] Heb. *shut as to his right hand.* See ch. xx. 16. The LXX renders by *double-handed*, and the Vulgate, *qui utraque manu pro dextera utebatur.* But this goes beyond the original, which clearly implies that the right hand was to a certain extent disabled by the exclusive use of the left. Blunt (*Undesigned Coincidences*, II. 4), suggests that Ehud was actually one of the six hundred Benjamites of whom we read in ch. xx. 47 (cf. *v.* 16). The event, according to Lightfoot and others, occurred about thirteen years before this. "What a strange choice doth God make of an executioner! A man shut of his right hand! It is the ordinary wont of the Almighty to make choice of the unlikeliest means." Bp. Hall.

a present] Heb. *minchah*, the word used of the meat offerings in Levit. ii. 1, &c. It seems to have been (1) an acknowledgment of dependence and obligation, (2) a token of good will. See Gen. xxxii. 18; 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6, for a similar use of the word. In the last passage it is translated *gifts.*

13. *a dagger*] The Hebrew has *sword.* So the LXX and Vulgate.

edges] Lit. *mouths.* See note on ch. i. 8.

a cubit] So the Syriac and Arabic. The LXX and Vulgate have *span.* The word is not the usual one for cubit, but one which only occurs here. It means apparently something *cut off*, hence a small rod or staff.

raiment] The word denotes wide flowing garments.

17. *fat*] The LXX renders by a word equivalent to our *fine* man. See Acts vii. 20, Heb. xi. 23 (Greek).

19. *quarries*] The LXX, Vulgate and our margin have *graven images* or *idols.* The Targum renders as our version. The Syriac leaves the word untranslated, while the Arabic substitutes *Palestine* for *Pesilim.* The word is rendered "graven images" in Deut. vii. 25, cf. Is. xxi. 9; Jer. viii. 19. It is never used elsewhere of quarries. But it is derived from a word signifying to hew stones. See Exod.

were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him; and 20 he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of *his* seat. And Ehud put forth 21 his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and

xxxiv. 1, 4; Deut. x. 1, 3, &c. where this word is used of the making the two tables of stone on which the Law was written.

Gilgal] This must have been the first encampment of the children of Israel, inasmuch as that (Josh. iv. 19, v. 10, 13) was close by Jericho. Keil's objection that it must have been the other Gilgal, near Bethel, because it lay in Ehud's way to Mount Ephraim (*vv.* 26, 27) is of no weight, since fugitives often strive to baffle their pursuers by taking a circuitous route.

Keep silence] The word in the original is *has*, equivalent to our *hush*.

20. *a summer parlour*] So also Wiclif. Lit., *the upper room of cooling*. Luther translates by *summer arbour*. It "corresponds in every respect to what the Turks call a *keushk* (kiosk). It consists of a small room built by itself on the roof of the house, having many windows to catch the breeze. There is a kiosk similar to that of King Eglon standing a few rods from the palace of Cheragan on the edge of the Bosphorus, which was a favourite resort of the late Sultan." Van Lennep, *Bible Customs*, 443, 4. There was frequently a door of communication with the outside, whence persons having secret audience might be admitted and dismissed. The expression is only found here. Though this chamber was no doubt also a hall of private audience, no idea of the kind is suggested by the word, as it is by our translation, where the word *parlour* (from *parler*, to speak) originally signified *audience-chamber*.

a message from God] Lit., *a word of God*. It is observable that the name of Jehovah is not used, as it usually is on occasions of this kind. Eglon would have paid but little attention to a communication from the deity whose worshippers he had overthrown. Cf. 2 Kings xviii. 33–35. But on receiving what he supposed to be a Divine communication, he arose reverently from his seat. It has been objected that Ehud could not be supposed to have been the deliverer of a message from Chemosh, the Moabite deity (1 Kings xi. 7). But there was a general belief in a Divine being, apart from the particular name and attributes under which he was worshipped in any particular country. The Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, 50 a) supposing the message to have been from Jehovah, draws the inference that if a heathen rises up to receive a message from God, much more should an Israelite do so. Even Ewald admits that this history bears upon the face of its details the mark of genuineness.

22 thrust it into his belly: and the haft also went in after the
blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could
not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.
23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the
24 doors of the parlour upon him, and locked *them.* When he
was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that
behold, the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they said,
25 Surely he covereth his feet in *his* summer chamber. And

21. *thrust*] Rather **struck** or **smote**, as in ch. iv. 21.

22. *blade*] This word is unusual in this sense, and occurs first here. It signifies *flame* in ch. xiii. 20; and is applied to the blade of the sword here on account of its flashing.

and the dirt came out] A great number of translations have been suggested here on account of the fact that one of the words here used occurs nowhere else. On the whole the translation in the margin appears preferable to any other.

23. *through the porch*] This word only occurs here. It signifies the outer staircase or its entrance (see note on summer parlour, *v.* 20) through which those admitted to a private audience were dismissed. This accounts for Ehud's departure having been unnoticed. The word is derived from the banisters (or, more properly, *balusters*, from the Italian *balaustro*), which were upon the staircase. The original signifies *in the direction of*, or, *by the way of the staircase*, as is implied by the fact that Ehud is said to have shut the door after him, which he could not have done after he had passed "through the porch."

upon him] The best authorities are divided on the point whether "him" refers to Eglon or Ehud. The former is preferable, because we learn from the next verse that it was the inner door through which Ehud entered, and not the outer one, through which he went away, that he secured.

locked them] There is no "them" in the original, which occurs first here. The word signifies to *fasten*, and comes from the same root as the word signifying shoe or sandal, because it was fastened on the feet. The LXX. renders *wedged it up*, but that *locked* is the correct translation appears from *v.* 25.

24. *doors*] Many of the doors in the East are still double doors, and as it is evident from this place that those of Eglon's summer chamber were. The word translated *door* comes from a root signifying to *hang*, whence we learn that the doors of the Hebrews were swung on hinges, such as may still be seen in the ruins of the cities of Bashan. "The outer door was a slab or stone four and a half feet high, four wide, and eight inches thick. It hung upon pivots, formed of projecting parts of the slab working in sockets on the lintel and threshold, and though so massive, I was able to open it with ease." Porter, *Giant Cities of Bashan*, p. 26.

covereth his feet] An euphemistic term for performing the offices of

they tarried till *they* were ashamed: and behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened *them:* and behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and 26
passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. And 27
it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. And 28
he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan

nature. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. The style of dress in the East explains it. See a note in Gesenius, *Lexicon*, s. v. shatan.

25. *till they were ashamed*] The whole passage shews (1) that Eglon was a monarch who enjoyed to the full the state usually connected in later periods with the regal dignity, and (2) that the customary decencies of civilization were by no means unknown, at least among the higher classes, in the times, and among the peoples, with whom this history deals.

a key] Lit. *the opener.*

26. *tarried*] The word is not the same as in the last verse. There it signifies to *wait:* here it implies a certain amount of reproach, they *delayed.* Cf. Gen. xix. 16, xliii. 10.

quarries] See note, *v.* 19.

Seirath] Or, *Seirah.* It signifies *woody* (literally, *hairy*) *district,* and was a common name of a woody, mountain country. Compare Seir, the home of Esau, and another mount Seir on the northern border of Judah, near Chesalon (Josh. xv. 10). Beyond the fact that it was among the mountains of Ephraim, we do not know where this place is.

27. *from the mount*] Or from the mountain district, to whose fastnesses the children of Israel had retreated to escape the oppression of Eglon. The description is given with "local minuteness" (Ewald, *Hist. Israel*, II. 277). In those days of cruel warfare and oppression, the home of liberty was always in the mountains. As the narrative of Xenophon shews, the mountain peoples in the Persian Empire were practically independent of the central power. So in the Middle Ages, the Swiss mountaineers defied alike the power of Austria and Burgundy. And among ourselves the history of Wales and the Highlands of Scotland are proofs that even a powerful government had very little real authority in the inaccessible recesses of the mountains. It is only the rapid advance of modern discovery which has enabled us to penetrate these regions, and to place the invaders of a mountain district upon a footing of something more like equality with its defenders.

28. *the fords of Jordan*] See Josh. ii. 7, and cf. Numb. xxxiii. 48, 49, and Josh. ii. 1. There is still a ford near Riha, the site of the

29 toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. And
they slew *of* Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all
lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.
30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel.
And the land had rest fourscore years.

31. *The deliverance by Shamgar.*

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew

ancient Jericho. It is about an hour's journey in a north-easterly direction from the northern extremity of the Dead Sea (Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine*, p. 451). For the fords mentioned in ch. vii. 24, and ch. xii. 5, see notes there.

toward Moab] Lit. *to* Moab. Some prefer to render *from the Moabites*. But this puts a strained construction on the words. Nor is there any need of it, for it is obvious Ehud's object was to cut off the retreat of the Moabites from Jericho by taking possession of the ford in their homeward route.

29. *And they slew*] Lit. and they *smote*.

lusty] Lit. *fat*. It is not the same word as that used of Eglon, *v.* 17. That gives rather the idea of gross feeding; this either (1) like the Greek λιπαρός, having the meaning of oily, shiny, and hence of a clear complexion, of robust health, or (2) like our *stout*, which originally referring to men of portly frame, is sometimes used as equivalent to *strong*. The word only occurs here in this sense; but a kindred word is found in the same sense in Ps. lxxviii. 31, where it is clearly parallel to "chosen men."

30. *was subdued*] Lit. *was bowed*. It is the word from which *Canaan* is derived.

fourscore years] The spirit of the Moabites must therefore have been effectually broken by this triumph of Israel, though their loss in battle does not seem to have been great. Probably the reason why Ehud resorted to assassination was that he was aware of the probability of a disputed succession in Moab, after the death of Eglon. The LXX. adds "and Ehud judged them till he died," and this, though not expressly asserted in the narrative, appears to be implied by ch. iv. 1. And in spite of Ehud's crime, as it appears to us who live under a clearer light, his influence over the Israelites was clearly a salutary one.

31. The deliverance by Shamgar.

31. *And after him*] Not after his death (see ch. iv. 1) but after he had smitten the Moabites. No doubt a dangerous invasion of the Philistines was repelled by Shamgar, who thereby obtained the right to be numbered among the deliverers of Israel. But it is nowhere said that he judged Israel. From this the conclusion seems irresistible that this exploit was performed during the life-time of Ehud. See last note. "From the passage in the song of Deborah (ch. v. 6) his resistance to the

of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

Chap. IV. 1—24. *The oppression of Jabin, and the victory of Barak.*

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of **4** the Lord, when Ehud was dead. And the Lord sold them **2** into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host *was* Sisera, which dwelt

enemies of Israel was not very effective. The highways were impassable till the days of Deborah herself." Milman, *Hist. Jews*, I. 245. Shamgar was no doubt of the tribe of Judah or Dan, and his exploits, like those of Samson, purely local.

with an ox goad] This word is found nowhere else in the Bible. It is akin to the name of the letter *Lamed*, which in its original form somewhat resembled this instrument. The goad is a formidable weapon. It is sometimes ten feet long, and has a sharp point. We could now see that the feat of Shamgar was not so very wonderful as some have been accustomed to think." Porter, *Giant Cities of Bashan*, p. 201.

Ch. IV. 1—24. The oppression of Jabin, and the victory of Barak.

2. *sold them.* See note on ch. ii. 14.

Jabin] This seems to have been a common name among the kings of Hazor. See Josh. xi. 1. It signifies *intelligent*. "They had been Lords alone of the promised Land, if their commiseration had not overswayed their justice; and now their enemies are too cruell to them (in the just revenge of God) because they were too mercifull." Bp. Hall.

Hazor] The meaning of this word is *fort* or *castle*. The word in Hebrew seems to mean anything enclosed, but in the kindred Semitic languages the root has the meaning of to *wall round*, to *besiege*. A similar meaning attaches to our name *Chester*, with which compare Glou*cester*, Lei*cester*, and the like. Its situation seems to have defied explorers, although, as Josephus and the book of Joshua agree, it must be found near lake Merom, the modern Hûleh (Josh. xi. 1—5). Almost every fresh traveller seems to have fixed on a different site. Thus Robinson discusses the claims of Hazireh, Tell Hazûr, and el Hazury —the latter suggested by Ritter, and rejects them all, fixing upon Khuraibeh (*Biblic. Res.* II. 366). Tristram (*Bible Places*, p. 276) thinks that Capt. Wilson has "convincingly argued" that Hazor is Tell Harah, on an isolated hill, two miles south-east of Kedesh (see note on *v.* 6). That it must have been near Kedesh is evident from Josh. xix. 36, 37, it being a feature in these lists that the order of the names is determined by geographical position. Lieut. Conder decides for Tell

3 in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children
4 of Israel. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapi-

Hadireh. The name Hazor or Hazar was a very common one (see Numb. xxxiv. 4, 9; Josh. xv. 23, 25, 27, 28, xix. 5, 36, 37), just as the termination *cester* is among ourselves. Hazor must have been rebuilt during the time (more than 150 years) which had elapsed after its destruction by Joshua.

Sisera] The famous Rabbi Akiba, who perished in the rebellion of Bar-Cochab in the reign of Hadrian, is said by Deans Stanley and Milman to have been descended from Sisera by a Jewish mother. See Milm., *Hist. Jews*, III. 426[1], Stanley, *Lectures on the Jewish Church*.

Harosheth of the Gentiles] Or of the **nations** (cf. Gen. xiv. 1; Josh. xii. 23). This expression has usually been taken to mean a collection of peoples of various nationalities fused into one state, like the kingdom of Mercia in early English history. But recent researches (see Sayce, *Babylonian Literature*, p. 23), have established the fact that a people called *Gutium* existed under their Turgal or great chief (the LXX. reads *Thargal* in Gen. xiv. 1). Whether these people had a settlement in the Gilgal of Josh. xii. 23 (which must not be confounded with the places of that name already mentioned) cannot be ascertained. Harosheth is unknown, but Cassel and Bertheau imagine it to have been derived from some metal work industry (*charash* signifying a workman, especially an engraver). Recent investigation has shewn that in times much earlier than these, not only the Assyrians, but the Hittites, had much skill in this craft.

3. *chariots of iron*] See Josh. xvii. 16, and note on ch. i. 19.

mightily] Lit. *with force*. See 1 Sam. ii. 16.

4. *Deborah, a prophetess*] Like Miriam, Exod. xv. 20, Huldah, 2 Kings xxii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22; and Noadiah, Neh. vi. 14. "She in some respects resembled Miriam, insomuch that she was a prophetess and sang the triumphant song of victory—but she greatly differed, in that she was a judge, which Miriam was not; and again Miriam only took the lead in thanksgiving, whereas Deborah was herself the inspired leader and chief...From Huldah she entirely differed in another respect that Huldah was more of a priestly character and dwelling in the sacred college of the temple. Huldah the wife of Shallum spoke of repentance and humiliation before God; Deborah of glory and victory before

[1] Jost, however, whom he cites (*Geschichte der Israeliten*, II. 206) does not quote the Pirke Aboth with reference to R. Akiba, nor does he relate the tradition about Sisera. I am indebted to the Rev. Dr Schiller-Szinessy, Reader in Rabbinical Literature to the University, for the origin of this story. It appears first in the *Liber Jochassin*, a Lexicon of History and Biography compiled in 1504, but doubtfully (compare pp. 37 and 75). The error originated in a passage twice repeated in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, 96 b, and *Gittin*, 57 b) to the effect that Sisera's descendants had taught the law in Jerusalem, and those of *Haman* in *B'ni B'rak*. This last place was where R. Akiba also taught.

doth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under 5
the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in
mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her
for judgment. And she sent and called Barak the son of 6
Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath

men." I. Williams, *Female Characters of Holy Scripture.* Strictly the Hebrew word, like the Latin *vates* and the Greek προφήτης (see 1 Cor. xiv.), signifies any one who speaks under a Divine influence (see also Exod. vii. 1, where it appears to mean anyone who is the mouthpiece of inspiration). We are not told, for instance, that Miriam foretold future events, but she evidently acted as the inspired leader of the women in the great choral ode of Exod. xv., as Deborah did in the similar one recorded in the next chapter. Deborah, however, possessed the power of prescience. See *v.* 9. The name signifies a *bee*, Is. vii. 18. The masculine plural is found in ch. xiv. 8. The Chaldee paraphrast, who frequently introduces traditional matter, and who has largely added to Deborah's song (see notes on next chapter), tells us here how Deborah was a person of consideration, possessing palm-trees in Jericho, parks (lit. *paradises*) in Ramah, and productive olives in the valley (Bik'ath), a house of irrigation in Bethel, and white dust (was this the fertile soil produced by terracing the rock, or potter's earth, as Lightfoot, *Centuria Chorographica*, ch. 11?) in the king's mount.

Lapidoth] The word signifies *lamps*, or *torches*. See note, ch. vii. 16. As in French and German, so in Hebrew the word *woman* is also used for *wife*. Some have therefore rendered *a woman of a fiery spirit*, and the Rabbis have supposed that Barak (lightning) was her husband. With Barak we may compare *Barcas*, the cognomen of the Carthaginian Hamilcar, remembering that the Carthaginian and Hebrew were cognate languages.

judged] No doubt she made use of her inspired authority in deciding disputes. See note on ch. ii. 16. "Such a remarkable woman as this has a lesson to individual women in the Christian Church...Inspiration is not now confined to one, but it is poured forth on all in the Christian Church; and there is no heroic action, great and good, but which women may be equal to from a like inspiration of faith." I. Williams, *Female Characters of Holy Scripture.*

5. *Ramah*] Now *Er Ram*, "upon a round hill five miles east of Gibeon." Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 116. He adds "a little to the north of it, in the deep hot valley 'between Ramah and Beth-el,' was the palm tree of Deborah, where Rebekah's nurse was buried," Gen. xxxv. 8. No doubt the name was the cause of the selection of the place by this second Deborah.

Beth-el] See note on ch. i. 22.

6. *Kedesh-naphtali*] Now Kedes, about five miles north-west of Lake Hûleh. "It partakes of the general character of the cities of this region—standing on rocky spurs or ridges, above green peaceful basins." Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 382. "It is full of interest-

not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of

ing ruins. There are fine old tombs, double sarcophagi, placed, not in cases, but on pedestals of marble masonry, remains also of many ancient buildings, but especially of one very large building of which the eastern front and part of the other walls is still perfect." Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 276. This building however appears to have been a synagogue of late date. We hear of Kedesh as Cades in the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. xi. 63—73).

draw toward] The word in the Hebrew is here used in a sense somewhat unusual (but see ch. xx. 37). It has been variously explained. The LXX. and other versions escape the difficulty; the former by omitting the passage altogether, the others by a paraphrase. As it stands in our version, it means, (1) *make thy way gradually* (see ch. xx. 37), to Mount Tabor. But the preposition that follows is not *unto*, but **in**. Therefore (2) it has been supposed that like Exod. xix. 13; Josh. vi. 5, it means *make a long drawn sound* with the trumpet. The objection to this is that in that case "with the trumpet" would have been added. Then (3) it has been suggested that it means "*draw towards* thee companies of troops one by one." But the objection to this is that in "drawing" in Mount Tabor Barak is to take 10,000 men with him. The Chaldee renders (4) "spread out in Mount Tabor." The best explanation would seem to be (5) that Barak was to lead his troops gradually along in the region of Mount Tabor, until Jehovah had led Sisera (the word is the same in each case) unto the brook Kishon. Render, **draw out upon Mount Tabor.** Barak was to protect his scanty band in the mountain district until the moment had arrived to swoop down upon his enemy upon the plain. The word "draw," connected with "take" is applied to the lamb in Exod. xii. 21, probably as referring to the leading the lamb gently out of the flock. The same word is used of sowing seed in Amos ix. 13 (cf. Ps. cxxvi. 6), no doubt as referring to the gradual progress of the sower along the furrows.

mount Tabor] This cone-shaped mountain is remarkable rather from its situation than its height. It is about 1700 feet above the level of the sea, but rising as it does in the midst of the great plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon (see note on ch. vi. 33), it is a conspicuous object from all sides. It was long supposed to have been the scene of the Transfiguration. But Ritter has disposed of this idea by shewing that from the time of Antiochus the Great (218 B. C.) down to the destruction of Jerusalem, it was a fortress. Josephus, moreover, repaired this fortress (*De Bell. Jud.* I. 13). Ritter also detects the period when the tradition arose. Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome (A. D. 332—422) mention it. Eusebius, who died about A. D. 340, knows nothing of it. See also Robinson, *Bibl. Res.*, III. 350—360.

children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun] It is evident that already a great want of concert had begun to shew itself among the

Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon 7
Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his
multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. And 8
Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go:
but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go. And 9
she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the
journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for

children of Israel. In ch. v. 14—18 we find that though some of the tribes gave their assistance, complaints were made of the inactivity of others who were dwelling near the scene of action. From Josh. xix. 12, 22, 34, we find that Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali were the three tribes bordering on Tabor. From ch. v. 15 we find that the chief men of Issachar were present at the battle. As in the case of the English people before the battle of Hastings, though from different causes, the wars of Israel during the time of the judges would appear to have had merely a local interest; the national feeling, which in the former case had never really existed, in the latter had grown cold. Porter, *Giant cities of Bashan*, p. 260, thinks that as the chief strength of Israel was in the hills, the position of Naphtali, cut off from intercourse with the other tribes by the great "valley of Jezreel," led, with this single exception, to timidity and irresolution. See also ch. i. 33.

7. *the river Kishon*] Properly the **winter torrent**, or its bed (χειμάρροος LXX.; cf. the brook Kedron, St John xviii. 1). The bed in many cases was dry in the summer, but a rushing stream poured down it in the winter. The Kishon, which took its rise near Mounts Tabor and Gilboa, flows in a northwesterly direction through the plain of Jezreel and empties itself into the Mediterranean at the foot of Mount Carmel. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 40; Ps. lxxxiii. 9.

multitude] The original is very expressive of the mixed host which constituted Sisera's army. The word suggests the *hum* or tumult made by so vast a host.

8. *And Barak said*] The character of Barak, though pious, does not seem to have been heroic. Like Gideon, and in a sense Samson, he is an illustration of the words in Heb. xi. 34: "Out of weakness were made strong." (See Vaughan, *Heroes of Faith*, Lect. xv.) He was possibly tinged with a little of the same superstition which displays itself in the taking the ark with Israel into the battlefield (1 Sam. iv. 3—5). He could not be satisfied with a mission from God by the mouth of a divinely accredited messenger. He needed some visible presence to assure him of the invisible strength on which he had to depend. Therefore, though God's favour was not altogether withdrawn from him, he yet lacked the high honour to which other of Israel's heroes attained. See however Exod. iv. 10—14. The LXX. adds here "because I know not the day in which the Lord will prosper His angel with me."

9. *for thine honour*] "Thy advantage shall not be unto the way

the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And
10 Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. And
Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went
up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went
11 up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the
children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed
himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the
12 plain of Zaanaim, which *is* by Kedesh. And they shewed
Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up *to* mount
13 Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, *even*
nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were*
with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of
14 Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the

which thou goest." LXX. "On this occasion the victory will not be reputed to thee." Vulg.

shall sell] See note on ch. ii. 14.

10. *at his feet*] So most commentators. See Exod. xi. 8. But some prefer *on foot*. See *v.* 15. We may either translate (1) as A. V., or (2) *and there went up at his feet* (or *on foot*) *ten thousand men*, or (3) *and he went up on foot, ten thousand men*, i. e. his whole force amounted to 10,000 infantry, a contrast being intended between his small and scantily equipped force and the vast host of Sisera with his dreaded chariots of iron. The latter is the preferable rendering.

11. *the father in law*] Here, *brother-in-law*. See Numb. x. 29. It means any near connection by marriage. The same word occurs in Arabic in the same senses.

had severed himself] See ch. i. 16.

plain of Zaanaim] Rather, the **oak in Zaanaim**. The Keri has Zaanannim as in Josh. xix. 33. The proper translation there is *from the oak in Zaanannim*. The LXX., Targum, and Jerusalem Talmud, however, translate *the oak of Bitzanaim* (or *spoilers*, according to the LXX.), taking the Hebrew b' (in) as part of the name.

12. *to mount Tabor*] This may be the meaning of the original, but it literally means had *ascended* Mount Tabor, and the probability is (see note on *v.* 6) that Barak, for security's sake, had gone up into the mountain district, where Sisera would be unable to follow him with his chariots. Cf. "went down" in *v.* 14.

13. *gathered together*] The word is the same as that employed in *v.* 10, where it is rendered *called*. It seems (as margin) to mean to assemble by proclamation.

14. *And Deborah said*] We may almost trace the decadence of Israel in this history. No high-priest, with the sacred Urim and Thummim stands before God's altar to ask His will, as in Joshua's days, or even those of Phinehas. See ch. xx. The sacred fire is no

day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, 15
and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after 16
the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left. Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the 17
tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, 18
and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear

longer to be found in official quarters; it descends wherever an heart can be found capable of receiving it.

15. *discomfited*] This word gives scarcely an adequate idea of the sudden terror and confusion into which Sisera's host fell at the unexpected onslaught of Barak. The word is the same as that used in Exod. xiv. 24, and Josh. x. 10, and is cognate with the word translated *multitude* in *v.* 7. The English word, derived from the Mediæval Latin *disconfigere*, to *unfasten*, *unloose*, means to *part asunder*, as a victorious general does his routed foes. Josephus states that a hail-storm came on, which unstrung the bows and slings of the Canaanites, and benumbed them with cold. This was the last stand made by the Canaanites against Israelite supremacy.

on his feet] See *v.* 10, where the Hebrew is the same as here.

16. *not a man*] Hebrew, as margin **not unto one.**

17. *Jael*] The reason for Sisera betaking himself to Jael's tent is suggested by Bertheau, in his commentary. It was because the manners of the east, then as now, did not allow strange men to enter a woman's tent. Hence, if permitted, in his urgent need, to enter, he was safe from Barak's pursuit. In that of Heber, who was on friendly terms with Jabin, he might not have been secure. But he evidently thinks (*v.* 20) that the extremity of his need might give rise to a suspicion that he might have sought shelter in a woman's abode. He therefore instructs Jael what answer to give.

18. *Turn in, my lord*] The disgraceful treachery of Jael has been thought to be palliated by the sacred historian, and it has been supposed that Christians were bound to defend it. No such necessity is laid upon us. The act was utterly indefensible, and was rendered more completely so because it is an Eastern custom, and no doubt was so in the days of Jael—a custom which scarcely the most treacherous and unprincipled Arab ever fails to observe—that any one who has partaken food under a man's roof is safe from molestation, at least as long

not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she
19 covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give
me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.
And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and
20 covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand *in* the door of
the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and
inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou
21 shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the

as that roof shelters him. See note on ch. v. 24. And compare the scene in ch. xxviii. of Sir W. Scott's *Talisman*, where Saladin is made to say "Had he murdered my father, and afterwards partaken of my food and my bowl, not a hair of his head could have been injured by me." A similar story is told in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. lix.

a mantle] Rather, **the rug**. This word occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. Its meaning is not certain. The Greek versions render by *hide*, and a kindred word is found in Syriac and also Arabic with that meaning. Gesenius renders by *mattrass*, and as there is a kindred Syriac word signifying *bed*, it was doubtless the rug stretched on the ground on which Jael slept, it being the Oriental custom to sleep on mats or rugs stretched on the ground. See Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 390.

19. *a bottle*] Rather, **the** bottle. It was no doubt made of skins, as the ancient bottles frequently were. See Ps. cxix. 83, also Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. *Bottle*, and of *Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Art. *Vinum*. They were used for wine (Josh. ix. 4, 13; 1 Sam. xvi. 20), and are still to be seen used for that purpose in Italy and Greece. The word means either (1) that which gives forth fluid, or (2) that which is shaken, the operation of churning being frequently carried on by shaking the cream in a bottle.

milk] *Sour* milk, according to Josephus, who hints that Jael intended to display her unfriendliness by this act. But this is most improbable, since Sisera's suspicions were clearly not aroused. Rabbi Tanchum supposes the milk to have been fermented, and Sisera to have been intoxicated by the draught. This is possible, for to this day the Arabs drink a sort of fermented milk, known by the name of *Koumiss*, which has intoxicating properties. But it is not necessary to account for Sisera's unconsciousness, which the history clearly attributes to weariness. The milk may have been in a bottle either (1) because it was fermented, or (2) in preparation for churning. But it is called *curds* in ch. v. 25. See note there.

21. *a nail of the tent*] Rather, the **tent pin** or **peg**, i.e. the nail or peg with which the tent was fastened. This may have been of iron, as the expression is used of a nail driven into a wall (Is. xxii. 23, 25), or of some hard wood, since Ezekiel (ch. xv. 3) especially excepts the vine from the species of wood used for this purpose. See also note on ch. xvi. 14.

took] Rather, as margin, **put**.

tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened *it* into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out 22
to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her *tent*, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Ca- 23
naan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the 24
children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Ch. V. 1—31. *The triumph song of Deborah.*

Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on 5
that day, saying,

a hammer] Lit. the hammer (Makab, see below); no doubt that which was used for driving the tent peg into the ground. Jael, "her attitude, her weapon, her deed, are fixed in the national mind...the Hammer of her country's enemies." Stanley, *Jewish Church*, I. 326. He cites the names of Judas *Maccabeus*, and Charles *Martel*.

fastened it] The word is only used here, and in the narrative of Achsah, ch. i. 14. In the latter passage it is used intransitively. Here it is impossible to say whether it is so or no. It may either be translated (1) "she struck it into the ground" (there is, however, no "it" in the original), or (2) "it sank into the ground." The LXX. renders, "it passed through." Whether the verb is to be understood of gradual or rapid motion it is impossible to say. But it cannot be rendered, as in the A. V. and some of the ancient versions, "fastened."

fast asleep] A cognate word is used in Gen. ii. 21 of the deep sleep which fell upon Adam at the creation of Eve. See also Dan. viii. 18, x. 9.

So he died] Rather, and he died.

23. *subdued*] Lit. *bowed*, as in ch. iii. 30.

24. *prospered, and prevailed*] Lit. *went to go and was hard*. See for *hard*, ch. ii. 19. The meaning is *went on continually being hard*, as in Gen. viii. 3, of the abatement of the waters of the flood.

Ch. V. 1—31. The triumph song of Deborah.

1. *Then sang Deborah*] This song is, as Bertheau remarks, "the fresh and powerful expression of the joyous excitement" into which Israel had been thrown by the recent victory, a victory, he adds, which gained additional significance from the down-trodden condition of Israel

2 Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves.
3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD;
I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.

previously. He shews that it divides itself naturally into three divisions, of nine verses each, exclusive of *v.* 2, which constitutes the opening, of *v.* 12, which forms an introduction to the second portion, in the form of an address to the heroes of the day, and *v.* 31, which forms the conclusion. Each of these divisions of nine verses may be subdivided into three divisions of three verses each. Such a numerical coincidence can hardly, he says, be accidental. But, as Keil observes, the "three leading sections are divided into three *somewhat unequal* strophes."

2. *Praise ye the Lord*] This forms the introductory stanza, calling upon Israel to praise God for the victory granted to their patriotic readiness. These words come last in the original, where they are more emphatic.

for the avenging of Israel] Lit. *in the breaking forth of the breakers in Israel.* Render, **for that the leaders took the lead.** So the Alexandrian MS. of the LXX. and some of the best modern interpreters, such as Bertheau and Gesenius. From the idea of breaking forth comes that of beginning, and hence comes the idea of *leading.* See Deut. xxxii. 42, where the LXX. and the modern commentators would render "from the head of the leaders of the enemy." The parallelism is better preserved in this rendering than in any other. The alacrity of the leaders corresponds to the reciprocal willingness of the people. Other interpretations are (1) "that the strong (literally the word is supposed to be *hairy*) in Israel shewed themselves strong," (2) "that the hair wildly waved in Israel," (3) that of the Syriac "in the vengeance with which Israel was avenged," (4) the Vatican MS. of the LXX. has "the revelation was revealed in Israel," i. e. by reason of the willingness of the people, there was a revelation of their true mind.

willingly offered themselves] As we say, they *volunteered.*

3. *Hear, O ye kings*] This and the two following verses celebrate the glorious deeds of Jehovah, who has once more shewn favour to his people.

princes] The word is an uncommon one, and occurs first here. It means any persons of great consideration. Jonathan adds in the Targum "not by your own valour, and not by your own might did ye prevail and go up against the house of Israel." See note on *v.* 5.

the Lord] It is to be remembered (see note, ch. i. 1) that the original is *Jehovah.* The literal translation is *I to Jehovah, I* (emphatic) *will sing, I will sing praise to Jehovah, God of Israel.*

sing praise] The meaning of the original is to *sing to an instrument.* Cf. Exod. xv. 2. The word is onomatopœetic, and denotes the buzz of the chords of a stringed instrument.

LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
The clouds also dropped water.
The mountains melted from before the LORD, 5
Even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.
In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, 6

4. *out of Seir*] Cf. Deut. xxxiii. 2. The idea is clearly, as Dr Cassel interprets, that from the time when the forty years' sojourn in the desert came to an end, and Israel compassed Edom in that final march (Numb. xx. 22, xxi. 4) which never ended until they possessed the promised land, the history of Israel as a nation commenced. The great processional Psalm, Ps. lxviii., embodies this passage, as this is moulded upon the opening strain of the song of Moses in Deut. xxxiii.

marchedst] This is the best equivalent of the original, which signifies slow and dignified movement.

the earth trembled] "The superior grandeur of Scriptural over the noblest Hellenic conceptions is scarcely anywhere more clearly apparent. The earthquake, with Hesiod and others, is symbolic of conflict between the powers above and the powers below, between Zeus and Typhon.

> 'Great Olympus trembled beneath the immortal feet
> Of the Ruler rising up, and hollow groaned the earth
> . . . . . .
> The earth resounded and the heavens around, and the floods of ocean.'"
>
> HESIOD. *Theogon.* v. 840, &c.

To the prophetic spirit of Deborah the earthquake becomes a powerful symbol, but it is the symbol of the creature's humility and awe on account of the sacred nearness of God." Dr Cassel.

5. *melted*] Or (as margin) *flowed*. This is a possible rendering, but many modern translators (following the LXX.), prefer **shook**, the translation of a verb similar in its inflexion to that rendered *melted*. The 68th Psalm, in quoting this passage, leaves out the allusion to the mountains, and it is uncertain whether we are to supply *shook* or *dropped* with "this Sinai." But the former is more probable. Jonathan here, paraphrasing the 68th Psalm, represents Tabor, Hermon and Carmel as each advancing their claims to be the dwelling-place of God's majesty, and the decision as being made in favour of Sinai. Like Hannah's song (see 1st Samuel in this series, Appendix III.), the song of Deborah is largely interpolated in the Targum.

that Sinai] Rather **this** Sinai, i. e. the Sinai which hung over them as they commenced their march. Cf. "this Lebanon" (Josh. i. 4) so called because it was visible.

6. *In the days of Shamgar*] Here a new subject is introduced—the

In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked *through* byways.
7 *The inhabitants of* the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.
8 They chose new gods;
Then *was* war in the gates:

down-trodden condition of Israel before the battle. It is continued till the end of *v.* 8. Shamgar's was probably only a local deliverance.

in the days of Jael] Some have supposed, since Jael was one of Israel's deliverers, that *another* Jael is here meant. But no doubt the explanation of the mention of her name here is that though personally at peace with Jabin, her sympathies were with the oppressed Israelites, and that she had witnessed their wrongs with a fierce indignation which culminated in the murder of Sisera. Thus she may have come to be regarded by Israel as Charlotte Corday is regarded by many.

highways] The word *highway* means originally a road *raised* above the surrounding country. The Hebrew here, however, has not this meaning, for which another word is used. See *v.* 20, note. The expression which occurs here signifies the ordinary roads by which travellers went *were unoccupied*. This may be translated "the caravans ceased."

travellers] Lit. *those who walked beaten paths*. Thus our translation gives the sense exactly. The expression occurs here for the first time.

byways] Lit. *winding* or *twisted roads*. This expression occurs only here and in Ps. cxxv. 5. The A. V. has given the true meaning.

7. *The inhabitants of the villages ceased*] The word translated *cease* here is the same as that rendered *were unoccupied* in the last verse. The verb has no nominative, and some words like those supplied in our version must be added. The word translated villages, *Perazon*, is connected with *Perizzite* (see ch. i. 4, note) and means *habitations in the open country*. But some copies of the LXX. render *the mighty men*, the *rulers* (*fortes*, Vulg.), and this is preferred by some expositors, the root meaning to *spread* out and thence to *separate*, the word *Pharisee* being derived from a kindred root. Luther renders by *peasants*. The ancient and modern versions in truth give every variety of rendering. Thus the French (Protestant) Version has "les chefs manquaient." And this is the case throughout the poem. For a word of similar derivation in the sense of open country, see Ezek. xxxviii. 11, Zech. ii. 4 (8, Heb.), and Esther ix. 19. Habak. iii. 14 is disputed.

8. *They chose new gods*] i. e. Israel. See ch. ii. 11, 13. The rest of the verse states the result of this evil choice. The Vulgate, Syriac and others render *God chose new* things, or wars. See Appendix I. The A. V. is preferable, since the "war in the gates" is clearly connected with the distress of Israel.

Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel?
My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel, 9
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye the LORD.
Speak, ye that ride on white asses, 10
Ye that sit in judgment,
And walk by the way.
They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the 11
places of drawing *water*,

was there a shield] This cannot mean that the Israelites *had* no weapons (as in 1 Sam. xiii. 22), for if so, the battle of Mount Tabor could not have been fought. It means that such was their condition of servitude, that they dared not *display* them.

spear] Three kinds of spear are mentioned in the O. T. The first, the *chidon*, was a long slender lance. The second, the *hanith*, was a javelin which could be thrown (1 Sam. xviii. 11, xx. 33). The third, the *romach*, which is mentioned here, appears to have been a heavier weapon.

9. *My heart*] Here we return to the idea of *v.* 2, the willingness of the leaders in Israel, the whole section concluding with a picture of enfranchised Israel returning continual thanks for their deliverance.

governors] This word is derived from *hok*, a statute prescribed by authority.

10. *Speak*] Or, **sing**, as in Ps. cxlv. 5.

white asses] The Vulgate has *nitentes*, "sleek," "glossy." The LXX. render by *noonday*, and Luther by *beautiful*. Jahn (*Archaeologia Biblica*) suggests that the asses might have been painted, and states that this was an Eastern custom. The horse was at present little used by the Israelites, though in the days of the kings they became common. A breed peculiar to the East, of asses either white or spotted with white (white tinted with *red* according to Gesenius and Bertheau), was the mark, in those days, of persons of distinction. The word occurs here only.

in judgment] Rather, with most modern interpreters (the ancients rendering as A. V.), **on mats** or **carpets** (literally anything *stretching out*), the later Aramaic plural in *-in* being substituted here for the more ordinary one in *-im*. See note on ch. iii. 16, on the word *raiment*.

11. *They that are delivered*] These words are added to fill up a blank which must be supplied in some way or other. Luther renders, "there cry the sharpshooters." Others would fill up by *rises the song of praise*, i.e. from the voice of the archers. The LXX. renders "the voice of those who stay behind in the midst of the drawers of water." The Vulgate has "ubi collisi sunt currus." The Chaldee here again largely interpolates the original. Wiclif's translation, following the Vulgate, is striking "where the chaaris ben hurtlid." We may either translate (1)

There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD,
Even the righteous acts *towards the inhabitants* of his
villages in Israel:
Then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.
12 Awake, awake, Deborah:
Awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak,
And lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.
13 Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over
the nobles *among* the people:

"Far from the noise of archers, between the drawers of water," or (2) "Because of the noise of the archers...there they rehearse," or (3), "*returned* from the noise of the archers," &c.

noise] Lit. *voice.*

archers] Some prefer *those who divide*, i. e. the spoil. But the text is more vivid. The archers return from the battle, and relate the events of the day to their more peaceful brethren, who have remained at home to discharge their pastoral duties.

shall they rehearse] Or, perhaps, *they rehearse.*

righteous acts] Heb., as margin, *righteousnesses.*

villages] See note on *v.* 7. Here the translation *rule* or *guidance* would suit the grammar of the passage best. But the grammar of poetical Hebrew is often obscure. And the translation *the righteousnesses of his open country*, i. e. the righteous acts of God to those scattered about in it, is at least admissible. The LXX. renders "righteous men were strong in Israel," in spite of the fact that the word rendered "righteous men" is feminine, and has been rendered thus in the earlier part of the verse. The Chaldee renders here as in *v.* 7, "cities of villages," i. e. unwalled cities, as Buxtorf renders.

shall the people of the Lord go down] Rather, they **went down.** So LXX., Vulg., Luther.

12. *Awake*] Here we commence a new division of the song. The attention of the hearer is re-awakened by this lively appeal to Deborah and Barak.

captivity] The abstract for the concrete, captivity for those led into captivity. This is one of the expressions from this song made use of in Ps. lxviii. See notes on *vv.* 4, 5.

13. *Then he made*] The next three verses contain a description of Barak's followers. The rendering of the A. V. takes the verb as transitive, from a root meaning *to rule.* But it may be intransitive, from a root meaning *to go down;—then came down a remnant to the mighty ones—the people.* This makes better sense, and is supported by the Alexandrian codex of the LXX, as well as the Targum. Keil's explanation seems quite satisfactory, that mighty men came down to the fight, yet they were but a remnant, compared to what had been. But

The LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.
Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against 14
Amalek;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy people;
Out of Machir came down governors,

the fact that the word rendered *mighty ones* is not in the construct state, and therefore the noun following cannot be in dependence on it, has caused Dr Cassel to alter the Masoretic pointing, and to render "down rushed a remnant against the robust; the people of Jehovah rushed down with me against the powerful." The objection to this rendering is that it translates *l'* (to), *against* in the first member, and *with* in the second member, of the parallelism. There is no objection beyond the Masoretic pointing to the rendering *Then came down a remnant to the mighty; the people of Jehovah came down to me with* (or *against*) *the valiant.*

mighty] The original idea in the word thus translated is that of *strength.* See Gen. vi. 4.

14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek*] Literally, *From Ephraim their root in Amalek*, i.e. From Ephraim came those whose root is in Amalek. The meaning is that a detachment came from that part of Ephraim in which the Amalekites formerly dwelt. See ch. xii. 15. The word *root* refers to the firm footing Ephraim had acquired in Amalek's former dwelling. Bertheau refers to Ps. lxxx. 9, and Is. xxvii. 6 for this sense. And we know from Josh. xvii. 15—18, that the mountain country was the region of which the Ephraimites first took possession. Jonathan refers here to Joshua as an Ephraimite and Saul as a Benjamite, and to both as having warred against Amalek. The LXX. has "Ephraim rooted them out in Amalek," and Wiclif, following the Vulgate, translates *hath doone hem a wey into Amalek.*

after thee, Benjamin, among thy people] As this is punctuated in the A. V. no intelligible meaning can be obtained from it. But regard it as an address to Ephraim, and all becomes clear. "After thee came Benjamin, among thy people," Benjamin being the next tribe to Ephraim in a southerly direction, and being much intermingled with Ephraim. See note on ch. i. 22. Also Ps. lxviii. 27. No doubt some of the most warlike Benjamites responded to Barak's summons, though the number was evidently very few. We should not fail to remark how this fits in with the history in ch. xx., xxi.

Machir] Machir was apparently the only son of Manasseh, cf. 1 Chron. vii. 14, 15, with Numb. xxvi. 29—33; Josh. xiii. 31, and xvii. 1, 2. Whether these Manassites came from Gilead or from the western side of Jordan, cannot be decided, but though some commentators take the former view, a comparison of the song with the map makes the latter infinitely more probable. And it is, moreover, confirmed by the distinct statement of *v.* 17.

governors] See note on *v.* 9.

And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

15 And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;
Even Issachar, *and* also Barak:
He was sent on foot into the valley.
For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds,

handle the pen of the writer] Or, *those who handle the rod of the scribe*, or the *marshal's staff*. The word *draw* is the same as that discussed in ch. iv. 6, 7. The word translated *pen* is the same as that rendered *tribe* elsewhere (see note on ch. ii. 16). The *scribe*—see 2 Kings xxv. 19—was probably a military officer, who compared with his list the men who came in answer to the summons, and then marshalled them in procession before the general with his rod of office in his hand. This is the drift of the Vulgate paraphrase. Other interpretations are (1) "skilful with the accountant's pencil" (Cassel); (2) "who lead on at the head of long extending processions" (Bertheau); (3) "sind Regierer geworden durch die Schreibfeder" (Luther).

15. *the princes of Issachar*] "Dukis of Ysachar," Wiclif. The original is more indefinite, *princes in Issachar*. This gives more point to the triumphant outburst in *v.* 18. On Zebulun and Naphtali rested the brunt of the battle. The Masorites read "*my* princes," but they are not supported by any of the ancient versions.

even Issachar, and also Barak] Lit. *as Issachar; so Barak*, i.e. Barak was there as well as, or on an equality with—as regards martial renown—the princes of Issachar.

he was sent on foot into the valley] Lit., *in the valley was he sent on his feet*. Perhaps, *into the valley were they sent at his feet*. For *valley*, see ch. i. 34. It was evidently the valley (Emek) of Jezreel. For *on his feet* see ch. iv. 10, 17. Bertheau thinks that an irrepressible enthusiasm is here hinted at in the verb. But there seems no reason to suppose so.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart] The word translated *for* is literally *in*. The word translated *divisions* (Peleg, see Gen. x. 25) is undoubtedly derived from a root signifying to divide; but whether mental divisions ("diviso contra se Ruben," Vulg. – the Chaldee specifies the discussions as taking place between the advocates of Barak and of Sisera), or territorial divisions (as LXX.) is not so clear. Other interpretations are (1) *brooks* (Keil, Cassel); (2) *families* (Bertheau). The word is translated *brooks* in Ps. i. 3. The meaning is that beside the brooks of Reuben great resolutions were made, the word translated *thoughts* being akin to that rendered *governors* in *vv.* 9, 14. The LXX. renders it by *exactnesses*.

16. *Why abodest thou*] These resolutions were formed, but not acted upon. So the last portion of *v.* 15, with this and the succeeding verse,

To hear the bleatings of the flocks?
For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan: 17
And why did Dan remain *in* ships?
Asher continued on the sea shore,
And abode in his breaches.
Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeoparded their 18
lives unto the death
In the high places of the field.

refer to those who did not come to the help of Israel, concluding in *v.* 18 with the praise of Zebulun and Naphtali. The pastoral character of the tribe of Reuben is mentioned in Numb. xxxii. 1. Hence the appositeness of the allusion.

sheepfolds] The dual form shews that these folds were divided into two parts. The LXX. leaves the word untranslated.

bleatings of] Rather, **pipings for** (*sibilos*, Vulg.). The word is akin to the Greek and Latin *syrinx*, the instrument with which the shepherd called his flock, or played while he watched it. See Art. *Syrinx* in Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.

For] The Hebrew this time is *at*.

searchings] The repetition of the phrase in this altered form has a touch of sarcasm in it. Great were the resolves of Reuben, but they did not pass into action. They were searchings of heart, discussions of plans and no more. The word does not mean what searchings of heart does among ourselves, namely, a careful examination of the life and conscience, but simply discussing of plans, endeavours to find out the best course of action.

17. *remain*] Lit. *sojourn*.

continued] Rather, **dwelt**.

breaches] Rather, **creeks**. The word only occurs here. It means the places where the sea *breaks in* upon the land. It is kindred with Perez (2 Sam. vi. 8) and Pharez (Gen. xxxviii. 29). The tribe of Asher was upon the coast, and Joppa most probably belonged to Dan. See Josh. xix. 46. For some reason or other Judah and Simeon are not named. It can hardly be that the jealousy of the pre-eminence of Judah had reached the pitch which it afterwards did (2 Sam. xix. 43). Possibly Judah and Simeon, being border tribes, had to fight for life and freedom against the Philistines, Moabites and Edomites, and might well therefore be excused the conflict with the northern oppressor. See Introduction, Ch. II.

18. *jeoparded*] The literal translation is as the margin, *caused to reproach* (as the LXX.), evidently with the idea involved in our phrase "contempt of life." The word *jeoparded* is derived either from *jeu perdu* or *jeu parti*, *game lost*, or *game equally divided*. The latter approaches most nearly to the sense of hazard or danger; and Chaucer spells it

19 The kings came *and* fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no gain of money.
20 They fought from heaven;
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
21 The river of Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.
22 Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings,
The pransings of their mighty *ones*.

jupartie, which seems to decide the point. Here, as in the word *people*, *o* has replaced the French *u* in the spelling of the word. The parallelism of the original is lost in the A.V. It runs thus: "Zebulun is a people who despised their lives unto death; and Naphtali upon the heights of the field."

19. *The kings came*] Rather, **kings** came. Here we enter upon a new subject, the gathering together of the enemy and their defeat. It ends with *v.* 22.

gain of money] Lit. *spoil of silver.*

20. *courses*] Lit. *highways;* the Hebrew word signifying a raised path, like the paved portion of the roads in Belgium. See note on *v.* 6.

21. *swept*] The word only occurs here, and seems to come from the same root as our words grip, gripe.

ancient river] Either (1) that brook (see note on ch. iv. 7) that has flowed on for ages, or (2) that brook renowned from old (the Targum translates "the brook along which banners were borne and the prowess of Israel celebrated of old"). For the first meaning compare

> For men may come and men may go,
> But I flow on for ever.
>
> TENNYSON, *The Brook.*

The word here is not the usual word for ages of time, but is a form altogether peculiar of a word signifying *before.*

thou hast trodden down] So LXX. and Vulg. There can be little doubt that the verb must be rendered imperatively, and in this case the noun must be taken adverbially, and the whole rendered **March on, my soul, in strength.**

22. *Then were the horsehoofs broken*] Rather, then **stamped** the horsehoofs. The word occurs first here, and is used of any sudden blow, as of a horse's hoof striking the ground or of a hammer on an anvil (Is. xli. 7). See also *v.* 26, where the same word is used.

pransings] The Hebrew word only occurs here and in Nahum iii. 2.

Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, 23
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.
Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the 24
Kenite be,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, *and* she gave *him* milk; 25
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.

23. *Meroz*] Here begins a fresh division, which extends to the end of *v.* 27. A strong contrast is drawn between the lukewarmness of the inhabitants of Meroz and the warm zeal which Jael displayed for the cause of Israel. Striking as is the whole song, this and the following section far surpass the rest in dramatic power. Of Meroz, though some attempts have been made to identify it, nothing certain is known.

the angel of the Lord] The Rabbis interpreted this of the Angel of the Covenant. Cf. Exod. xiv. 19, xxiii. 20; Mal. iii. 1. See Schöttgen, *Hor. Hebr.* 91.

the mighty] Or, the **valiant**. See note on *v.* 13. The word is not the same as that rendered "mighty ones" in the last verse.

24. *Blessed above women*] This blessing is clearly opposed to the curse on Meroz. We need not suppose that because Deborah sang this song under the influence of inspiration, we are therefore to accept her judgment upon a point of morals. She sang according to her point of view, which was a purely national and exclusive one, under a dispensation national and exclusive in its character, which, when it had done its work, was to be replaced by a better. To her, accustomed, like her fellow-countrymen, to view all events from an Israelitish standpoint, and under the exaltation of the recent victory, Jael's conduct naturally appeared eminently glorious and heroic.

in the tent] i.e. leading a nomad existence.

25. *butter*] So the LXX. and Vulg. But the narrative in ch. iv., as well as the first part of this verse, would lead us to prefer, with some commentators, **cream**, or with Gesenius, less probably, *curdled milk*. Of a meal with Aghyle Aga in 1862, Dean Stanley says (*Lect. on Jewish Ch.* i. 325), "the sour milk (Lebban) was in a large pewter vessel like a small barrel, a cup floated in it to skim and drink the contents. The sweet milk (Halib) was in a smaller pewter vessel, round like a pan, to be drunk by raising it to the lips."

in a lordly dish] Lit. *in a bowl of mighty ones*. See note on *v.* 13. The word here rendered bowl only occurs again in ch. vi. 38. It was probably (see Van Lennep, *Bible Customs*, 475) the "shallow drinking cup, usually of brass," still used in the East. The Chaldee and LXX. render *phial*, i.e. not a bottle, but a shallow bowl.

26 She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
And cried through the lattice,

26. *hammer*] The word only occurs here, but it is derived from the verb freely translated "with the hammer" here. See next note. A different word, no doubt less poetic, is used in ch. iv. 21.

with the hammer] Lit. *she hammered.* See note on *v.* 22.

smote off] Rather, **smote through.** This word also is only found here. It is very similar in sound to that which follows, which is probably the reason for its use, alliteration being a marked feature of this song.

when she had pierced and stricken through] Rather, **and she crashed and struck through.**

his temples] The original signifies the thinnest part of the skull. This word only occurs here and in the Song of Solomon.

27. *there he fell down dead*] This poetical description is highly coloured, but it expresses in the liveliest terms the triumphant feeling of patriotic Israelites at the death of the chief captain of their mighty oppressor. The word rendered *dead* is not the usual expression, but a word which occurs only here in this sense. It is the passive participle of a verb connected with the word *Shaddai* (Almighty), and signifies therefore death through being overpowered by an enemy. It must also be remembered (see ch. iv. 9, ix. 54), that to die by a woman's hand was the greatest disgrace that could befal a man.

28. *The mother of Sisera*] The literal translation of this passage is,

> Through the window she looked and cried aloud
> The mother of Sisera (cried) through the lattice.

The words translated *cried aloud*, and *lattice*, are not found save in this passage. And the word translated looked, means to *bend forward eagerly* in looking, which gives a vividness to the picture difficult to convey in an English translation.

lattice] The LXX. has *network.* The Hebrew word means an opening through which cool air is admitted. See note on *summer parlour*, in ch. iii. 20. "These flat roofs or terraces are sometimes inclosed with a low parapet of masonry, or a higher one of lattice work, supported by wooden frames, which screen the women of the household from the inquisitive gaze of the neighbourhood." Van Lennep, *Bible Customs*, 433.

Why is his chariot *so* long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered *her*, 29
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not sped? have they *not* divided the prey; 30
To every man a damsel *or* two;
To Sisera a prey of divers colours,
A prey of divers colours of needlework,
Of divers colours of needlework on both sides,
Meet for the necks of *them that take* the spoil?

so long in coming] Our version here just hits off the tone of disappointed expectation conveyed by the Hebrew word.

wheels] Rather, **paces**, a more poetic word. It means literally *steps* ("the feet of the foure whelid cartys of hym," Wiclif). The Chaldee paraphrases by introducing couriers with despatches—a much later idea. See 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2, xviii. 19—23, where tidings are still borne by word of mouth.

29. *ladies*] Rather, **princesses**. The word here is *Sarah*, the signification of which is well known. See Gen. xvii. 15. Wiclif has here (after the Vulgate) "oon wiser than other wyfis of hym."

she returned answer to herself] Lit. *she* (emphatic) *returned her words to her*. Some have thought that this means that she refused to be quieted by the suggestions of her ladies, but kept repeating her question. But the usual interpretation is more probable.

30. *Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey*] Rather, **are they not finding, dividing the spoil?** that is first searching the bodies of the slain, and then apportioning their booty by lot.

a damsel or two] Lit., *a damsel, two damsels*. The word damsel (Shakspere and Spenser write damosel) derived from the late Latin *dominicella*, the diminutive of *domina*, lady, does not give the somewhat contemptuous force of the original, which plainly implies that Sisera's captives, like those of the early Greek heroes, were destined to share the bed of their conquerors. The whole plot of the *Iliad*, as is well known, turns upon this custom.

divers colours] Lit., *dipped*, or *dyed* stuffs. The word is not found elsewhere.

divers colours of needlework] Lit., *dyed* stuffs—*embroidery*.

divers colours of needlework on both sides] Lit., *dyed* stuff, *double embroidery*, the word *embroidery* being in the dual number and the embroidery being in various colours and, as is very often the case, with gold and silver threads upon the coloured ground, just as much Eastern work is now, from Turkey to Hindostan. Van Lennep tells a story of a lady from the West who adopted the Eastern style of dress while in the East, and who, when she discarded it, found enough silver threads in her clothing to make a sugar-basin when melted down.

meet for the necks of them that take the spoil] The Hebrew is *to* or

31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD:
But *let* them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.
And the land had rest forty years.

CHAP. VI. 1—6. *The Oppression by Midian.*

6 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian
2 seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel

for the necks of the spoil. It must either (1) be translated as the A. V. (and the Targum) or (2) *for* (i.e. *made* for) *the necks of the spoiled*, or (3) *on the necks of the spoil*. A fourth interpretation, which would read (Sisera's) *spouse*, is entirely arbitrary. Many versions escape the difficulty by a paraphrase. Thus Wiclif following the Vulgate, has "for *the* neck." The revised version made after his death has "for *our* neck." If we take the second translation given above, the garments in question were stripped from the bodies of the slain, which are thus poetically regarded as spoil. If the third, it relates to the richly embroidered garments of the captives. Spoil was one of the great objects of pride to the conqueror, as a perpetual witness of his manly courage.

31. *the sun when he goeth forth in his might*] Or, **as the going forth of the sun in his might** ("as the sunne in his risynge shyneth, so glitteren thei," Wiclif). Thus the song ends with a noble image, a fitting conclusion to the series of vivid pictures which have gone before.

CH. VI. 1—6. THE OPPRESSION BY MIDIAN.

1. *Midian*] This tribe was descended from a descendant of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. xxv. 2). The territory of Midian proper was on the east side of the Ælanitic Gulf at the northern extremity of the Red Sea. It must, however, have extended beyond Edom to the confines of Moab (Numb. xxii. 4, 7, xxxi. 1; cf. also Exod. iii. 1, where Horeb seems to have been at no very unreasonable distance). Here, however, roving bands of Midianites, Amalekites and other nomad tribes, seem to have infested the land of Israel, much as the Bedouin and other tribes do at present. See also *v.* 4. Dr Cassel (see also Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine*, II. 272) thinks that Bedouin or Bedawin is the same word as Midian, *b* (or *v*, as it is often pronounced in Hebrew) and *m*, both labials, being interchanged. A similar interchange takes place in Welsh, where *f* (pronounced *v*) and *m* are used in the different inflections of the same word.

made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. And *so* it was, when Israel had sown, 3 that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the in- 4 crease of the earth, till thou come *unto* Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For 5

2. *dens*] The Hebrew word only occurs here. It means either (1) *light holes* (see Fürst's Lexicon), or (2) *mountain ravines* scooped out by the action of water (it is derived from the word signifying *river* in Hebrew), or (3) *grottoes or caves*. The ancient versions translate less definitely, "hiding places in mountains." How they can be said to have "made" them is not at first sight clear; but it is probable that they excavated the rocks for purposes of habitation. The rock dwellings at Petra must have been of a similar kind, and Wetstein mentions dwellings consisting of shafts driven into the earth on the mountain side, and at the depth of about twenty-five fathoms streets ran off, laterally, about six to eight paces wide. Something of this kind is implied by the article, which specifies some particular kind of abode which the Israelites made.

caves] This also has the article in the original, and must refer to the caves, of which there are an immense number in Palestine, which are partly natural, partly artificial. Of these the most famous now existing are in the Mons Quarantania, near Jericho, which have been described by Robinson, Canon Tristram and many other recent explorers.

strong holds] This is not *mibtzar*, the usual word for a fortified city, but *m'tzadah*. It means rather originally a place of lying in wait, and hence a place of retreat. Cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 19, xxiv. 1, (xxiii. 29 in the A. V.), 1 Chron. xi. 7, where the same word is used.

3. *the children of the east*] Nomad tribes of various kinds who were ready to join the Midianites and Amalekites in an expedition giving promise of plunder. There appears to have been no design of conquest in these invasions. They were more like the incursions of the Picts and Scots into Britain during the latter part of the Roman dominion, or the raids for "lifting" cattle which were common from the Highlands of Scotland into the lowlands at a much later period.

4. *increase*] Rather, **produce.**

till thou come unto Gaza] The Midianites (*v.* 33) appear to have crossed the Jordan by the fords near Bethshean, to have made their way to the fertile plain on the sea coast, and then to have gone forward, plundering as they went, to Gaza, the extreme limit of the Israelite territory (1 Kings iv. 24). Such incursions of the Picts and Scots into Southern Britain once (A. D. 368), laid London in ruins, and led to the famous request for Saxon assistance, so fatal to those who made it.

sheep] Margin, *goat*. The word means any individual member of a flock, whether sheep or goat.

they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the
6 land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

7—10. *The message of the prophet.*

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried
8 unto the LORD because of the Midianites, that the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the
9 house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand

5. *For they came up*] The Hebrew is here unusually emphatic: **for they** (emphatic) **and their cattle came up, and their tents.**

as grasshoppers for multitude] Lit. *according to the abundance of locusts for multitude.* The constant rendering of the word signifying *locust* by *grasshopper* in our version leads nowhere to such a misconception as here, where it is not merely the multitude, but the devastation which resulted from it that is implied. The Hebrew word signifying *locust* is derived from the idea of multitude.

camels] As the word translated *cattle* originally means simply *possessions*, it is probable that the cattle referred to above were their camels.

without number] Rather, **innumerable**, i.e. so numerous that they could not be counted.

6. *impoverished*] The Hebrew word is a forcible one. It means to hang helplessly down. Hence it came to mean to be poor, or oppressed, from the utter helplessness of such persons.

7—10. THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET.

8. *sent a prophet*] The word translated *prophet* means originally one who speaks by a Divine impulse, in strong and vehement words. See above, ch. iv. 4. It is remarkable that the existence of a class of men whose duty it is to convict men of moral declension is peculiar to revealed religion. Other religions had their priests, Judaism and Christianity alone had their *prophets*. If Mohammed has instituted anything analogous in his system, it must be remembered that Judaism and Christianity were the sources from which the greater part of his inspirations were drawn.

the house of bondage] Rather, of **servants.** The *'ebed* was often, but not always, a slave, though it must be confessed that the idea of inde-

of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; 10 fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

11—24. *The Call of Gideon.*

And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an 11

pendence and voluntary contract which in our days we attach to the idea of the word, has little place in the despotic notions now, as ever, prevalent in the East. The prophet, as is natural in one who desires to bring Israel back to its observance, quotes the very words of the law (Exod. xx. 2), save that he says "brought thee *up*," instead of "brought thee *out*."

9. *oppressed*] The LXX renders by the precise Greek equivalent θλίβω, to *squeeze* or *press*, the noun derived from which is rendered usually by *tribulations* in the A. V. The remainder of the verse shews that the inhabitants of Palestine are here referred to. Hence oppression, in the strict sense, cannot here be meant.

10. *Amorites*] There is a remarkable undesigned coincidence here. The expression "gods of the *Amorites*" is unusual. But the prophet is referring to the words of Joshua in his solemn appeal to the people recorded in Josh. xxiv. (see especially ver. 15, 18). The book of Joshua, according to the most probable theory, which assigns it to some period in the life-time of Phinehas, the High Priest, had long become one of the sacred books of the Jews, and as such its contents were of course familiar to the prophets of Jehovah.

11—24. THE CALL OF GIDEON.

11. *an angel of the Lord*] In human form, as was usual. See Gen. xviii. 2, cf. also ch. xiii. 3; Josh. v. 13. These appearances (*Theophanies*, as they have been termed) have been variously explained in the Christian Church. They were supposed in the earliest times to have been the Son of God Himself, the Angel of the Covenant (Exod. xxiii. 20, 23, xxxiii. 2; cf. 14). The prevalence of the Arian heresy caused this idea to be abandoned by the later fathers, from a fear that it might derogate from a belief in the true Divinity of Jesus Christ. Modern divines, however, have revived the theory. It was also a favourite doctrine of the Rabbis, who taught that the expressions "Angel of the Lord," "glory of the Lord," "Shechina," were synonymous, and that they were all names of the Messiah. All three, it may be observed, occur in the Chaldee Paraphrase of this history[1]. See Schöttgen, *Hor. Hebr.* I. 25, IV. 464.

[1] The rendering by the Chaldee Paraphrast of these two verses is: 12 And an *angel* of Jehovah revealed himself to Gideon, and he said to him, The *Word* (Meim'ra) of Jehovah is come to thy aid, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, I pray thee, Rabboni, if the *Shechinah* of Jehovah be for our help, why hath all this befallen us?

oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the
Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-
12 press, to hide *it* from the Midianites. And the angel of the
LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is*
13 with thee, thou mighty *man* of valour. And Gideon said

Fuller's information will be found in Hengstenberg's *Christology*, Liddon's *Bampton Lectures* (Lect. II.), and in Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary on Genesis*, Vol. I. pp. 184—191. On this occasion Jehovah, or His Angel, appeared in the guise of a traveller, with a staff (*v.* 21) in his hand.

an oak] Literally, *the terebinth*, the *Pistacia Terebinthus* of Linnæus, the Arabic *butm*. So the majority of authorities. It is a very common tree still in Palestine—a hardy, long-lived and spreading tree, likely to become a well-known landmark. See Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, II. 222 (3rd ed.). See also Josh. xxiv. 26; cf. Gen. xxxv. 4.

Ophrah] Various suggestions have been made for the situation of this Ophrah (which must not be confounded with Ophrah in Benjamin—Josh. xviii. 23; 1 Sam. xiii. 17). It was the village or farm belonging to Joash.

Abi-ezrite] From 1 Chron. vii. 18, we learn that Abiezer was the son of Hammoleketh, the sister of Gilead. He is called Jeezer (Heb. I'ezer) in Numb. xxvi. 30, but Abi-ezer in Josh. xvii. 2. It is however probable that in Numb. xxvi. 30, the letter Beth has dropped out, and the LXX *Achiezer* makes this almost certain, they having read Caph for Beth (כ for ב). Therefore Joash was a Manassite, and his land within the borders of that tribe.

Gideon] Literally, *hewer*. Gideon, from his name, was a man of might (ver. 12, 14), but from the insignificance of his family in a tribe not accustomed, like Ephraim, to take the lead (see *v.* 15, ch. viii. 2), he displays great reluctance to undertake the onerous charge the angel has put upon him, and can only be encouraged to do so by the most unequivocal signs of the support of Jehovah. See *v.* 36—40.

threshed] Probably not with a flail, but with a stick. The word is used of beating fruit off a tree. Deut. xxiv. 20; Is. xxvii. 12. Threshing was usually performed by oxen (Deut. xxv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18) upon floors (see 2 Sam xxiv. 16; 1 Chron. xxi. 15) prepared for the purpose. The ground was first beaten hard, then smoothed with a stone roller. Only poor people (Ruth ii. 17) knocked out their scanty store of grain with a stick. This (see also next note) shews the straits to which Israel was reduced by the incursions of these bands of marauders.

wine-press] Literally, *trough*, in which the grapes were trodden, from which the pressed juice flowed into the vat below. It was probably an apartment hollowed out of the rock, and therefore suitable for purposes of concealment.

to hide it] Lit., to *cause to flee*, i. e. to conceal either the wheat, or the fact of its being threshed, from the observation of the Midianites.

unto him, O my lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked 14
upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith 15
shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh,

13. *O!*] The Hebrew interjection seems to mean *with leave*, and is an expression of great humility, which accords well with the whole character of Gideon, as here depicted. He united much vigour and physical strength with much self-distrust and timidity. See ch. viii. 23, and cf. ch. viii. 2, 8, with ch. xii. 1—6.

why then is all this befallen us?] In spite of the repeated warnings of the prophets, Gideon does not appear to connect the misfortunes of Israel with their sins. Perhaps in his retirement and insignificance, he had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the true state of the case. In spite of the regulation which scattered Levites throughout the tribes to keep alive the knowledge of God's Law, there was in Gideon's time a very wide-spread ignorance of its precepts. For under a foreign oppressor's yoke the due observance of the law was impossible. And even when deliverance came, it did not necessarily involve a complete religious reformation.

forsaken] Lit., *beaten us down*, hence **rejected** us. The LXX (Codex Alex.) renders by the same word which in Rom. xi. 2, is rendered *cast away*.

hands] The original is stronger, **palm**, implying the *grasp* in which the Midianites held them.

14. *And the Lord looked upon him*] Rather, **Jehovah turned to him**, the angel here as elsewhere (Josh. vi. 2; cf. Gen. xxxii. 30), being spoken of as Jehovah Himself. See also ch. xiii. 22.

in this thy might] The physical strength which obtained for him his name (see note above), which is implied in the Angel's first words. Nor need he rest upon this strength alone, but a better ground of confidence was to be found in the assurance "the Lord is with thee."

hand] See note on "hands," *v.* 13.

15. *O my Lord*] See note on *v.* 13. The LXX. translates as A. V. But the Masoretic pointing here (as well as the Targum) requires the translation LORD, not *my Lord*, implying the Divinity of Him to Whom Gideon speaks. See note on last verse, and *v.* 21.

my family is poor] Lit., *my thousand is the meanest*. The thousand was probably a division for military purposes, parallel to the *mishpachoth* or septs, which were genealogical divisions. It may be compared with the *hundred* or *wapentake* of our Saxon and English forefathers. But the English nation has always attached less importance to family

16 and I *am* the least in my father's house. And the LORD
said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt
17 smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him,
If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign
18 that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee,
until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set
it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come
again.

19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and un-
leavened *cakes of* an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a
basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out
20 unto him under the oak, and presented *it*. And the angel of
God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened *cakes*,
and lay *them* upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And

than political and military considerations, while the Celtic races have adhered more closely to the former. The peculiar position of the Jews in Palestine, coupled with their ancestral pride as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, compelled them to pay equal attention to both. For the word translated *poor* see note on "impoverished" *v.* 6.

my father's house] The "father's house" was a subdivision of the *mishpachah*. It does not mean that Gideon was the least important of the sons of Joash, but that he was the most insignificant of the family, in a larger sense, to which he belonged. See Josh. xxii. 14. There was yet a more minute subdivision, the households, as in Josh. vii. 17, 18.

16. *as one man*] The angel would hereby intimate the suddenness and completeness of the overthrow. The whole vast host should be annihilated at one blow.

17. *shew me a sign*] Here, as in *v.* 13, we see the deep self-distrust of Gideon. He requires three several signs before he will lead Israel forth to battle.

that thou talkest with me] Or, *who thou art that talkest with me.*

18. *present*] Heb. *minchah*. See note on ch. iii. 15. The LXX. and Vulgate render here by *sacrifice.*

19. *unleavened cakes*] Literally, **sweet** cakes, as opposed to those made of leaven, which were soured.

ephah] This was a measure containing, as some suppose, about a bushel, or, as some say, three quarters of a bushel, of flour, English measure. It contained three of the *seah*, as we may gather from Gen. xviii. 6, and ten *omers*, as we learn from Exod. xvi. 36. The word is said by Gesenius to be of Egyptian origin.

broth] This word is only found here and in Isaiah.

the oak] Or **terebinth.** See above, *v.* 11.

and presented it] So the Masoretic text. But perhaps we may translate *and drew near.* So LXX., Cod. Vat.

he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end 21
of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and
the unleavened *cakes;* and there rose up fire out of the rock,
and consumed the flesh and the unleavened *cakes.* Then
the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. And when 22
Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon
said, Alas, O LORD God! for because I have seen an angel
of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, 23
Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then 24
Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it
Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the
Abi-ezrites.

21. *staff*] The word signifies *something to lean on.*

rock] The word here is not the same as before, and may be translated *stone.* It was no doubt a comparatively small portion of rock protruding from the soil.

there rose up fire] Hence arose a belief that all celestial beings would eat no earthly food (cf. ch. xiii. 16), and thus some Rabbinic expositors explain Gen. xviii. 8 that the angels only seemed to eat. That Gideon was not acting, as some have supposed, under such a belief, may be seen from his surprise and dismay when he found that the being to whom he was speaking was an angel.

22. *O Lord God*] Rather, **O Lord Jehovah.** Jehovah is usually translated "Lord" in the A. V., save when it is coupled with *Adonai* (Lord). Then it is translated "God." The Hebrew word usually translated God is *Elohim.* Thus a somewhat inaccurate and confused idea of the Divine nomenclature in the O. T. is conveyed to the English reader.

for because] Lit. *for therefore.* The phrase has been variously explained (see Keil, Bertheau, Cassel, *in loc*). But the best explanation seems that of the A. V. and Ewald, that it is simply a strong form of *because.* See Ewald, *Grammar*, p. 353 n.

23. *the Lord said unto him*] Not, apparently, through the medium of the now vanished apparition, but by a voice heard within.

thou shalt not die] The idea of the vision of God being fatal to the life of man was common in these early times. It appears in Hagar's speech (Gen. xvi. 13), and seems to have gathered intensity as time went on. See Exod. xx. 19, xxxiii. 20; Deut. v. 24, 25, 26; ch. xiii. 22. The origin of the feeling is explained by St Peter's speech on a remarkable occasion (Luke v. 8).

24. *Jehovah-shalom*] "Jehovah is peace."

unto this day] The expression marks a considerable time, or there would have been no necessity to make the observation. But it is quite inconsistent with the late date to which some would bring down the composition of these books.

yet] Or, as we should say in modern English, *still.*

25—32. *The command to destroy the altar of Baal and the Asherah, and its fulfilment.*

25 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said
unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second
bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of
Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by
26 it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the
top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second
bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the
27 grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten
men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto
him: and *so* it was, because he feared his father's household,
and the men of the city, that *he* could not do *it* by day, that
28 he did *it* by night. And when the men of the city arose

25—32. THE COMMAND TO DESTROY THE ALTAR OF BAAL AND THE ASHERAH, AND ITS FULFILMENT.

25. *young bullock*] Omit "young."

even] Rather, **and.** Two bulls were used in the removal of the altar, and the second was offered in sacrifice.

grove] The Asherah. See ch. iii. 7.

by it] Or *upon* it. See ch. vii. 1.

26. *rock*] So the Vulgate. But the original is *strong place*, and so it is translated by the Chaldee, Syriac and Arabic versions. Though the word does not occur before this, it is frequently found afterwards in the sense of fortress. No doubt Joash and his neighbours had devised some place of security to which they could retire on the approach of the Midianites. It shews how deeply the plague of idol worship had eaten into the heart of Israel, that it was consecrated to Baal and Asherah, not to Jehovah.

in the ordered place] This has been explained (1) on the foundation, i. e. of the altar of Baal; or (2) that the wood had been laid in order (cf. Gen. xxii. 9) for sacrifice to Baal, which was now to be used to build an altar for Jehovah; or (3) in an orderly manner, as in our margin ("in order," LXX., Chaldee and Syriac); or (4) with the preparation for the sacrifice. The meaning no doubt is "in conformity to the injunctions of the Law" (Exod. xx. 24—26). Thus (3) gives the best sense. See Exod. xxxix. 37, where the word is used of the *lamps* set in order in the sanctuary.

the wood of the grove] Rather, the *Asherah*, which was a wooden pillar. The altar of Baal was most likely, like the Canaanite altar to Baal and the horned Astarte now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, of stone.

27. *that he could not*] Rather, **so that** he could not.

early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? 29
And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the 30
city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it. And Joash said 31
unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar. Therefore 32
on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

28. *grove*] Rather, the **Asherah.**

by it] Or, **on it.**

30. *that he may die*] Here we may again see how deep-seated was Baal-worship in Israel at this time. The downward steps may be traced in this book, from the teraphim of Micah (ch. xvii., which relates, as will be seen, to events earlier than the time of Gideon) down to the utter forgetfulness of God displayed here. See also note, ch. xi. 39.

31. *against him*] Literally, *upon* him, i. e. with a hostile intent, which is more strongly intimated in the Hebrew than in our version.

Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him?] Rather, **Are ye striving for Baal? would ye save him?** The *ye* in each case is emphatic. Joash's state of mind is not an uncommon one in a decaying condition of national faith. He has not strength of mind enough to set himself against public opinion, though he is secretly ashamed of himself. He is glad when any one else has the manliness to stand up for what is right. And the danger of his son quickens both his perceptions and his resolution. He is shrewd enough to see that the argument that if Baal be divine, he needs no human intervention to protect his dignity, is not easily refuted, while his son's peril and his own evident authority in his city prompt him to meet the demand for the death of Gideon by a demand more in accordance with the national institutions, namely the death of those who would derogate from the honour of Israel's God.

while it is yet morning] Or *this very morning*, it being yet very early (*v.* 28).

32. *plead against him*] Rather, **contend with** him. Or, **avenge** it **upon him**, as most of the ancient versions. The life of Gideon henceforth was a standing witness of the helplessness of Baal, and his name a perpetual memorial of the fact. Hence he is called Jerubbesheth (that is, "the Disgrace shall contend") in 2 Sam. xi. 21, when in the pious

33—40. *Preparations for the conflict. The double sign from God.*

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over,
34 and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and
35 Abi-ezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him:

reign of David Baal was regarded in his true light. Cf. Jer. xi. 13; Hos. ix. 10.

33—40. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFLICT. THE DOUBLE SIGN FROM GOD.

33. *went over*] Or, *crossed*, i.e. the fords of Jordan near Beth-shean, where the river is fordable in many places. See Conder, *Handbook to the Bible*, p. 216.

pitched] The usual word in Hebrew for the encampment of an army.

the valley of Jezreel] The word for valley here is 'Emek (see note on ch. i. 19). The valley of Jezreel, or Esdraelon as it is more generally called (see Judith iii. 9, iv. 6), runs up from the Carmel ridge to the foot of Mount Tabor, where it trifurcates, the northern branch passing between Tabor and Little Hermon, and the southern below Mount Gilboa, while the chief and central portion runs into the Jordan valley by Beth-shean. This last was no doubt the route of the Israelites. The plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel (now Zerîn) has been described as the "battle-field of Palestine," and a recent traveller (Dr Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine*, p. 478) remarks on the singular group of memories connected with the spot, Barak and Deborah, Sisera, Gideon, Saul and Jonathan, Ahab and Jezebel, Jehu, Josiah, Holofernes and Judith, Vespasian and Josephus, Saladin and the Knights Templar, Bonaparte and Kléber. He might have added two others to the various list, the famous Egyptian conquerors Thothmes III. and Rameses II., better known as Sesostris, who invaded Syria by this route. See *Records of the Past*, Vols. II. and IV., Brugsch, *Hist. Egypt*, I. 320 sqq., II. 45 sqq.

34. *the spirit of the Lord*] See ch. iii. 10.

came upon] Rather, **clothed**, as margin and all the ancient versions except the Arabic.

was gathered] See note on ch. iv. 13. So also in the next verse.

Abi-ezer] His own particular *mishpachah* or *sept* of the tribe. This was more than his "father's house" (see note on *v.* 15), i.e. the inhabitants of Ophrah and the neighbourhood. The Abiezrites inhabited a tract of territory of which Ophrah was an insignificant portion (cf. *vv.* 15, 24).

35. *who also*] Rather, **and he, too.** The word "messengers" (the

and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by 36
mine hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of 37
wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And 38
it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full *of* water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not 39
thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but *this*

word, as in Greek, is the same which is also translated *angel*) is emphatic.

to meet them] Most probably the sense is that the remaining tribes who were summoned went up to meet those who were already in the field, to "effect a junction with them," as military historians say. The Midianites were a mere disorganized rabble, as the event shews. A skilful general, like Napoleon, endeavoured to prevent such combinations. Thus the battle of Quatre-bras was fought while the English were assembling at their rendezvous, in order to prevent their "going up to meet" the Prussians, who were already in the field. A glance at the map will shew that the junction in this case might easily have been prevented, since Asher, Zabulon and Naphtali were on the north, and the territory of the Manassites on the south, of the plain of Jezreel, and the huge hosts of the marauders lay in reckless confidence (ch. vii. 14) between them.

36. *If thou wilt save Israel*] See notes on *vv.* 11, 15, "He that hath might enough to deliver Israel, hath not might enough to keep himself from doubting." Bp. Hall.

37. *will put*] Or, *put*, i.e. at that moment.

fleece] This form of the Hebrew word occurs here only. It means what is shorn.

floor] i.e. *threshing* floor, an area prepared for the purpose either under cover (apparently in Ruth ch. iii.) or in the field. See note on ch. vi. 11.

38. *thrust*] Or, *squeezed*. So the ancient versions. The word is used in Job xxxix. 15; Is. lix. 5, of crushing an egg. This, as well as the word translated *wringed*, is one of the words which does not occur in previous books.

bowl] See note on ch. v. 25.

39. *Let not thine anger be hot against me*] The severity of the Mosaic Law has been much exaggerated. The truth was proclaimed from the first that God was "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, cf. also 7). Nothing could be more tender than the way in which God bore with the weak faith of Gideon, as of Moses before him (Exod. iv. 10—17). Upon the

once: let me prove, I pray thee, but *this* once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all
40 the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

CH. VII. 1—8. *The selection of the warriors.*

7 Then Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine

obstinate guilty, His wrath must needs fall. But wherever there was a spark of faith, He is ever revealed as dealing tenderly with it, that it may have time to grow into a flame.

CH. VII. 1—8. THE SELECTION OF THE WARRIORS.

1. *beside*] Lit., *upon*. Some would render "on an eminence above," but the A.V. is to be preferred.

well of Harod] Or, *fountain*. It is not known where this is. But the place is mentioned once again in 2 Sam. xxiii. 25.

host] Rather, **camp**.

valley] The valley, or 'Emek, of Jezreel. See note on i. 19; also vi. 33. We may observe the undesigned coincidence here. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh, and though (ch. vi. 35) he had called the northern tribes to his help, yet the place of junction would doubtless be in Manasseh. And the valley of Jezreel, where the Midianites (ch. vi. 33) were encamped, lay to the *north* of the tribe of Manasseh. Such minute accuracy is only possible in an historian who was relating facts, with full and accurate information before him. Nothing is known of the hill of Moreh, beyond the fact that it could not be the place mentioned in Gen. xii. 6 and Deut. xi. 30. Robinson, however (*Bibl. Res.* III. 117), describes a hill Mutsellim, its name having the same signification as that of Moreh (i.e. overseer, teacher), which commands a wide view of the valley of Jezreel. Others have suggested Little Hermon.

2. *too many*] "And now whiles the Israelites thinke, We are too few; God sayes, *The people are too many*." Bp. Hall.

lest Israel vaunt themselves] Cf. Deut. viii. 17, ix. 4, 5; Ps. cxv. 1; Is. x. 13. Not only did the sacred literature of Israel throughout attribute all deliverances to Jehovah, but many of them were so clearly beyond the reach of human skill or foresight, that no other explanation was possible. The accuracy of the surprising facts narrated in this chapter is vouched for by the trustworthiness of the minor details.

own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim 3
in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and
afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead.
And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand;
and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto 4
Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down
unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it
shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with
thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say
unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.
So he brought down the people unto the water: and the 5
LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water
with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by

3. *Whosoever is fearful and afraid*] This was commanded in Deut. xx. 8.

depart early] The word only occurs here. Derived from *bird*, it signifies *bird-like motions*. Here it seems to mean to go by a circuitous path, as men in fear would naturally do. Some of the ancient versions and the Cod. Al. of the LXX. refer it to Gideon.

from mount Gilead] As Gilead (ch. v. 17) was beyond Jordan, the mention of Gilead involves a difficulty, one solution of which is that by a copyist's blunder Gilead has been substituted for Gilboa, which (1 Sam. xxix. 1, 11; cf. xxxi. 1) could not have been far off. The Hebrew letters of Gilead and Gilboa are much alike. But the LXX. has *Gilead*, so that the error must have arisen very early; and, as Joshua xvii. 3 shews, some of Gilead's descendants dwelt on the western side of Jordan. There might therefore have been a Mount Gilead in western Manasseh.

And there returned of the people] This does not say much for the martial spirit of Israel at this time. "Who can but bless himselfe, to find of two and thirty thousand Israelites, two and twenty thousand cowards." Bp. Hall.

4. *try*] The word, which occurs first here, signifies to test by fire, as the refiner tests silver. See Ps. xii. 7, lxvi. 10; Mal. iii. 2, 3.

5. *lappeth*] Or, *licketh*, the word, which is infrequent, and occurs here for the first time, being almost exactly the same as our word *lick*. Some commentators have found (1) reasons for this choice in the idol worship of Canaan. Josephus (2) thinks that those who lapped lay down at their ease on the bank, and thus shewed their courage, in contrast with the rest, who drank hurriedly from the stream itself. But (3) it seems most probable that Gideon was directed to choose those who lapped as being men inured to warfare, who drank standing to guard against surprise by the enemy. It is remarkable that Gideon, who needed such unmistakable signs that God was with him, should so readily have yielded to so hazardous an arrangement as this. But we see

himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his
6 knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped,
putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men:
but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees
7 to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the
three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver
the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people
8 go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals
in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest of*
Israel every man unto his tent, and retained *those* three
hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in
the valley.

9—14. *The dream, and Gideon's encouragement thereby.*

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said
unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have
10 delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down,
11 go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and

(*v.* 10) that his faith required some further encouragement. "Nothing is more absurd than the notion that such traits were invented by a later historian." Ewald.

7. *By the three hundred men*] Cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

8. *victuals*] The Hebrew word originally signifies *provision obtained by hunting*, thus intimating a time in the past history of the nation when (Gen. xxvii. 3) much of their food was obtained in this way. See also note on ch. xvii. 10. The LXX., Targum and many modern commentators would translate here, "They took the people's provision in their hands," i. e. of the 9,700 who had returned, as some think. But this would have been an intolerable load for warriors who required above all things to be unencumbered. If we adopt this translation we must understand that the rest of the people gave them sufficient provision for their needs. But the translation does violence to the present Heb. text.

9—14. THE DREAM, AND GIDEON'S ENCOURAGEMENT THEREBY.

9. *Arise, get thee down*] This was a command to go and smite the host. But knowing Gideon's distrustful disposition, Jehovah bids him, if he fears to embark upon so great a venture without further encouragement, take an attendant and go down to listen to the conversation of the host. "He that hath might enough to deliver Israel, yet hath not might enough to keepe himselfe from doubting. The strongest faith will ever have some touch of infidelitie." Bp. Hall.

10. *servant*] The original has *young man*.

thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed *men* that *were* in the host. And the Midianites 12
and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, *there* 13
was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This *is* nothing 14

11. *armed* men] The meaning of this word has been much disputed. It occurs only here and in Exod. xiii. 18; Josh. i. 14, iv. 12. As it is related to the Hebrew word for five, it probably means *in battle array*, which usually is in five divisions, the van, the centre, the two wings, and the rear. There is an Arabic word almost precisely similar, with this signification. In spite of the disorder reigning in the camp of the Midianites, they probably had not abandoned the five-fold arrangement, or even if they had done so, warriors in the field might still retain this appellation, derived from what ought to be their order, just as soldiers are so named from their pay, though they have often failed to receive it, and cavalry from their horses, even when they are dismounted.

12. *lay along*] Literally, *were falling*, referring to the disorder in which they were scattered about. Compare the account of the Norwegian host before the battle of Stamford Bridge.

grasshoppers] See note on ch. vi. 5.

13. *cake*] The word, which only occurs here, signifies a *circular* cake. Such cakes are now (Van Lennep, *Bible Customs*, 88) "baked in an oven consisting of a hole in the ground three feet deep," or sometimes (see 1 Kings xix. 6) laid upon coals (or heated stones) and baked. So Buxtorf explains the Targum rendering here, though others (as Münster) regard it as referring to the holes pricked in it, as in the modern Jewish Passover cake.

barley bread] Alluding to the insignificance of Gideon and his family, or perhaps of his whole troop. Barley then, as it is still, was distinguished from "fine flour." "To heare himselfe but a Barly-cake, troubled him not. It matters not how base wee be thought, so we be victorious." Bp. Hall.

a tent] Rather, **the** tent, no doubt of the commander.

lay along] As above, **fell.**

14. *And his fellow answered*] Lit., his *neighbour*. The only explanation that can be given of this answer is that Gideon's expedition was known to the Midianites, but that in their overweening confidence

else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: *for* into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

15—25. *The defeat of Midian.*

15 And it was *so*, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.
16 And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with
17 empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as
18 I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD,

they disregarded it. The present speaker, more thoughtful than his fellows, foreboded evil from an attack which other men despised. "The children of the East," says Bertheau, "were celebrated for their skill in divination, as the story of Balaam shews."

15—25. THE DEFEAT OF MIDIAN.

15. *the interpretation thereof*] Lit., *its breaking*. A similar expression is still used in the Midland Counties of England for an event which calls to mind a previous dream.

host] Rather, **camp**.

Arise] This unexpected and remarkable confirmation of the visions and signs which had previously occurred removed all Gideon's remaining fears.

16. *companies*] Lit., *heads*.

lamps] Or, as the margin, *torches*. The word, however, in the Hebrew is almost identical with our word *lamp*, as with the Latin and Greek *lampas*. The pitchers were used to conceal the lamps, until by the noise of their breaking and the sudden appearance of the light, the Midianites should be thrown into confusion. The article in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* tells us that this mode of concealing the light of a lamp is still practised in Egypt. See also Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 480.

17. *Look on me*] Lit., *see from me*, i.e. take pattern from me. "Now when we would looke that Gideon should give charge of whetting their swords and sharpening their speares and fitting their armour, he only gives order for empty pitchers, and lights and trumpets." Bp. Hall.

and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* 19
with him, came unto the outside of the camp *in* the beginning of the middle watch; *and* they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands. And the three companies 20
blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal:* and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his 21
place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried,

18. The sword of *the Lord and of Gideon*] As the type of our version shews, the words "the sword of" are not in the original. Nor need they be supplied. With the LXX., Syriac and Vulgate we may render **For Jehovah and for Gideon.** But see *v.* 20.

19. *the middle watch*] The Rabbis disputed whether there were three or four watches. Rabbi Nathan (on Mishna I. 1) held that there were three, because the *middle* watch is here spoken of. But other Rabbis contended that there were four, because Ps. cxix. 62 and 148 represent the Psalmist as rising at midnight, and yet before the *watches* of the night, whence they concluded that there was more than one *after* midnight. Therefore Surenhuys denies that in the mention of the "fourth watch of the night" (Matt. xiv. 25; Mark vi. 48) the Evangelists were reckoning according to the Roman custom. The only other watch mentioned in Scripture is the last, or morning watch. See Exod. xiv. 24; 1 Sam. xi. 11. Gesenius thinks he finds an allusion to the first watch in Lam. ii. 19, but the phrase is the same as here, "the *beginning* of the watches," and the plural forbids us to translate "the first watch."

and brake the pitchers] The Hebrew construction, which here is a little unusual, implies the contemporaneous breaking of the pitchers, "indem sie zerbrachen:" Bertheau. Keil gives several instances of such stratagems from ancient and modern history. Hannibal extricated himself in a similar manner, when surrounded by Fabius. See Plutarch, *Fabius Maximus*, 6. 6. Niebuhr relates how in the last century an Arab chief escaped from a fortress in which he was besieged by a vastly superior force, through the employment of the same means as we here find employed by Gideon.

20. *companies*] Lit., *heads*, as above.

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon] We may either suppose that the word "sword" has dropped out of the text in the former place, or that in the excitement of the moment the three hundred men improved upon the war-cry prescribed to them. Literally rendered the words are **Sword! for Jehovah and for Gideon!** Jost remarks how seldom the Israelites, a comparatively uncivilized people inhabiting the mountains, ventured on a regular engagement with their enemies. Their greatest victories were surprises. See Introduction.

22 and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.
23 And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.
24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount

21. *cried*] The word signifies a loud cry of exultation or alarm.

and fled] These sudden panics are usual among undisciplined hosts. Cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 16, 20; 2 Kings vii. 6, 7; 2 Chron. xx. 23.

22. *Beth-shittah in Zererath*] Rather, Beth-shittah *in the direction of* Zererath. The Syriac and Arabic read Tzederah (probably Tzeredah, r and d being much alike in Hebrew and Syriac) here. In 2 Chron. iv. 17 we have Zeredathah, and most modern commentators prefer this reading in the present passage. But they have overlooked the fact that the LXX. (Al. Cod.) has Zererah here, for it translates "and gathered together" as from *tzarar* to bind or fold together. If Zeredathah be the correct reading here, a comparison of the last cited passage with 1 Kings vii. 46 shews that it was the same as Zarthan, Josh. iii. 16, &c. and perhaps with Zeredah in 1 Kings xi. 26 (where the Vat. Codex of the LXX. reads Zarira). If this be the place meant, near Kurn Sartabeh, it was the narrowest part of the Jordan. But from 1 Kings iv. 12 we read that there was another Zartan or Zarthan between Beth-shean and Jezreel, and not far from Abel-meholah. Now as there were fords of Jordan near Beth-shean, we must look for this Zererah or Zarthan in that direction. Beth-shittah signifies the *house of the acacia*, not the false acacia which grows in our gardens, but the acacia Seyal, a tree with a golden tuft of blossom, which from the hardness of its wood was much employed in the more costly work of the tabernacle (Exod. xxv.—xxxvii).

border] Lit., *lip*. The word is usually employed to denote the bank or shore of a river or sea.

Abel-meholah] See 1 Kings iv. 12, xix. 16. We learn from the latter place that it was the birth-place of Elisha. The name signifies *the dancing meadow*, probably from heathen rites carried on there in early times. Canon Tristram supposes it to be "the rich meadow land which extends about four miles south of Beth-shean, moist and luxuriant."

unto Tabbath] Lit., *upon* Tabbath, i.e. which borders on Tabbath. If this interpretation be correct, Tabbath can hardly be "a bold terrace on the east of Jordan" (Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 229).

23. *gathered themselves together*] Lit., *were cried together*, as in ch. iv. 13. The tribes here mentioned, as well as Issachar and Zebulun (cf. ch. vi. 35), bordered on the valley of Jezreel. But it is strange that Issachar is not once mentioned in this narrative.

Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. And 25
they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the *other* side Jordan.

CH. VIII. 1—3. *Ephraim's complaint and Gideon's reply.*

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast 8

24. *the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan*] The original shews that we must distinguish between the "waters unto Beth-barah" and "the Jordan." The Ephraimites were invited to take *all* the fords (i.e. of the intervening *wadies*) unto Beth-barah, and to take the Jordan fords near Beth-shean also. Beth-barah therefore cannot be the Bethabara beyond Jordan of St John i. 28, if that be the correct reading there, which is doubtful.

gathered themselves together] *Were cried together*, as above, summoned, that is, by proclamation.

25. *Oreb and Zeeb*] The name Oreb signifies *raven*, and Zeeb *wolf*. Compare our own early English *Wulf*ric and Æthel*wulf*. The places which took their names from the capture of these princes are not mentioned again, save that Isaiah refers to the former in ch. x. 26. Cf. Ps. lxxxiii. 9, 11.

on the other side Jordan] Lit., *from across the Jordan*. As the Ephraimites occupied the fords, they must have taken Oreb and Zeeb on the western side of Jordan. While they were being gathered together, others of the flying enemy had clearly made their way beyond Jordan, pursued by Gideon, and the expostulations of the men of Ephraim related in the next chapter must have taken place before the heads of Oreb and Zeeb were brought to him.

CHAP. VIII. **1—3.** EPHRAIM'S COMPLAINT AND GIDEON'S REPLY.

1. *the men of Ephraim*] Ephraim was apparently the leading tribe in central Israel. The political and the religious capital of the country were alike there. See Joshua xviii. 1, xxi. 2, xxii. 9, 12, xxiv. 1, 25. Ephraim was not originally the most numerous of the tribes (cf. Numb. i. and xxvi.), but its central position rendered it more secure from invasion, and no doubt by this time it had become preponderant in numbers. Hence the tone of arrogance assumed here. Similar conduct is reported of Ephraim in ch. xii. 1. The supremacy, however, passed eventually to Judah. The fact must not, however, be ascribed entirely

thou served us thus, that *thou* calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide
2 with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is* not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?
3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

4—12. *The pursuit.*

4 And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pur-

to the natural character of the people, but to the mountain region they inhabited, as well as to the qualities of the soil, which (see Ewald, *Hist. Israel*, Vol. II. sec. 3, B), being less productive than the rest of Canaan, was calculated to develop a hardy and energetic race. Accordingly, this tribe appears usually to have suffered little from the desolating incursions which did so much mischief in other parts of the country. The only exception to this which we meet with is in ch. x. 9. See also note, ch. v. 17.

sharply] Lit., as margin, *strongly*.

2. *What have I done now in comparison of you?*] There was sufficient justice in this remark to appease the anger of Ephraim. Gideon's three hundred men could not have done much towards the slaughter of the Midianites, though he could claim the credit of having dispersed them. The opportune seizing of the fords by Ephraim had been the means of securing the persons of two of the chief leaders of the Midianitish hordes.

the vintage of Abi-ezer] See note on ch. vi. 11, 15. Gideon, in conformity with his cautious and yielding character, represents his whole part in the matter as a small thing beside any one of the important successes gained by Ephraim at the fords, and modestly hints at the insignificance of his person and family by the side of the comparative greatness of Ephraim. We may compare the different behaviour of Jephthah under similar circumstances, ch. xii. 2—6.

3. *their anger was abated*] Literally, *their spirit* (so margin) *was slackened*. "His good words are as victorious as his sword; his pacification of friends better than the execution of his enemies." Bp. Hall.

4—12. THE PURSUIT.

4. *the three hundred men*] The same three hundred with which he had won the victory.

faint, yet pursuing] Whatever Gideon's lack of moral courage, he was brave and energetic in the field. The attempt to continue

suing *them*. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, 5
I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me;
for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zal-
munna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, 6
Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand,
that we should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon 7
said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and
Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with
the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. And he went 8
up thence *to* Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and

the pursuit of this vast host with three hundred men in an exhausted condition was at once an act of bravery and a work of faith.

5. *Succoth*] See Gen. xxxiii. 17; 1 Kings vii. 46; 2 Chron. iv. 17. It was in the territory of Gad on the other side Jordan, a little north of the brook Jabbok. The Midianitish host was therefore flying southward. The word (Gen. xxxiii. 17) signifies *booths*.

loaves] Literally, *circles*. The word is not that translated *cake* in ch. vii. 13. It is applied to the country north of the Dead Sea, where the cities of the plain were situated. The usual form of the loaf in Palestine is still round. Van Lennep, *Bible Customs*, p. 88.

6. *And the princes of Succoth said*] We may trace the progress of national disintegration and degradation by comparing this answer with the narrative in Josh. xxii. We may also see here the depressing effect of the Midianitish and other invasions upon the courage of the Israelites. It had an equally prejudicial effect upon their faith, for no doubt it was the apparent absurdity of three hundred men attempting to pursue so vast an host that induced the princes of Succoth to take such a tone.

hands] Literally, the *palm*, perhaps, as Bertheau suggests, with reference to the strong grasp they had laid upon the Israelites. It was the remembrance of this, and the comparison of their vast host with Gideon's little troop, that caused them to fear incurring the wrath of Zebah and Zalmunna by giving provisions to their foolhardy pursuers. Our version follows the LXX. here, which makes no distinction between the word translated *palm* and that translated *hands* in this verse. Other versions, as Luther's (and Wiclif, "the palmes of the hoondes ben in thine hoond") preserve the distinction.

7. *tear*] Or, as margin, *thresh*. The word is akin to our *thresh* and *dash*, and signifies to strike with violence.

briers] This word, which only occurs in this chapter, is one which the LXX. does not attempt to translate. The Jewish tradition supposes it to be a kind of thorny plant, and this is borne out by the context. The suggestion of Gesenius, that it means a kind of threshing machine whose rollers were set with jagged iron teeth, is quite inadmissible.

8. *Penuel*] And this where the vision of God (Gen. xxxii. 24—30)

the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had
9 answered *him*. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel,
saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this
10 tower. Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and
their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that
were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for
there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew
11 sword. And Gideon went up *by* the way of them that dwelt
in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the
12 hosts: for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zal-
munna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two
kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all
the host.

13—17. *The chastisement of Succoth and Penuel.*

13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before
14 the sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of

had appeared to their forefather Jacob! This conduct seems to have been altogether without the limits of Gideon's forbearance. The conduct of Ephraim, however arrogant, was at least dictated by a regard for the honour of the nation. The conduct of the men of Succoth and Penuel was cowardly and moreover unfeeling, as the conduct of cowards generally is, to say nothing of its utter inconsistency with the claim of Israel to be God's covenant people.

10. *Karkor*] This has been supposed by Eusebius and Jerome to be Carcar, about a day's journey from Petra, and therefore not far from the Dead Sea. The place, with Nobah and Jogbehah, has not been identified. The identification of Eusebius and Jerome falls in with the direction of the Midianites' flight, but the distance, as Gesenius remarks in his Thesaurus, seems too great. The remark that "the host was secure," however, implies that they *had* fled rapidly and far, and that Gideon, by making a *détour* to the east, had fallen on them quite unexpectedly. The word translated *host* in this and the succeeding verse is literally *camp* or *army*. The word translated *army* in *v.* 6 is that so familiar to us in the words Lord of *hosts*, *host* of heaven, and the like.

12. *discomfited*] Literally, *terrified*. See ch. iv. 15, note. By his sudden descent he communicated another panic to the already thoroughly demoralized army. But he was contented with the seizure of the leaders and the dispersion of their followers, and therefore pursued his victory no farther.

13—17. THE CHASTISEMENT OF SUCCOTH AND PENUEL.

13. *before the sun was up*] So the Chaldee version, though some

Succoth, and inquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* three-
15 score and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men *that are* weary? And he took the elders of
16 the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down
17 the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

18—21. *The death of Zebah and Zalmunna.*

Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of
18 men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered,

of the Rabbis render before the sun *went down*. Lit. *from the going up of the sun*, or *of Heres*. The word *Heres* is not the usual one for *sun* (see note on ch. i. 35, ii. 9—though we find it in ch. xiv. 18), and here it may be a proper name, though the presence of the article is somewhat against this. On the other hand the word *ma'aleh* is not elsewhere used except of an *ascent*, a path up a mountain. See Numb. xxxiv. 4; Josh. xv. 3, and ch. i. 36. And it is sometimes (as in 2 Sam. xv. 30, and 2 Chron. xx. 16) followed by the article before the name of the mountain. Heres is the name of a mountain in ch. i. 35, though clearly not this mountain. On the whole it seems more probable that this is a proper name. The LXX., Syriac and Arabic so render it. Dr Cassel remarks that as we have *the splendour of the dawn* (Zareth-shahar) as the name of a town on the same side of Jordan (Josh. xiii. 19) we need not be surprised at an *ascent of the sun* as the name of a mountain.

14. *described*] Literally, *wrote*. No doubt he gave Gideon a written list of their names.

15. *upbraid*] This word properly is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew, to load with reproach. So Bacon, speaking of envy of those who have been more successful than ourselves, says "it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes, and pointeth at them."

hands] Lit., *palm*, as above, *v.* 6.

16. *taught*] Taught them *a lesson*, as we should say. Lit. *made to know*.

17. *and slew the men of the city*] See note on *v.* 8, for an explanation of the unusual severity of Gideon here.

18—21. The death of Zebah and Zalmunna.

18. *ye slew at Tabor*] This refers to an incident not recorded. We may hence learn how very many details are passed over in the sacred narrative which, could we recover them, would solve difficulties now inexplicable. The murder at Tabor was either (1) the seizure and

As thou *art*, so *were* they; *each* one resembled the children
19 of a king. And he said, They *were* my brethren, *even* the
sons of my mother: *as* the LORD liveth, if ye had saved
20 them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether
his firstborn, Up, *and* slay them. But the youth drew not
21 his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth. Then
Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us:
for as the man *is*, *so is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and
slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments
that *were* on their camels' necks.

22—32. *Gideon's conduct after the victory, and his death.*

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over

execution of Gideon's brothers by the Midianites as soon as Gideon's determination to attack them was made known. Or possibly (2) we may have here the key to Gideon's action. His brethren had been cruelly murdered by the Midianites, and he himself forced into concealment. He longed for revenge, but dared not take it, until the vision and its attendant signs gave him courage to do so. Or again (3) Gideon's brothers may have been seized and slain when on their way to the rendezvous. It may be remarked in support of (2) or (3) that Zebah and Zalmunna do not appear to have been aware of the relationship to Gideon of the men who had been put to death, but to have been suddenly struck, when Gideon put the question, by their resemblance to him.

resembled] Lit. *according to the form*, as margin.

a king] Lit. *the* king; but the article is no doubt generic here.

19. *I would not slay you*] The gentleness of Gideon is displayed once more in this incident. There appears to have been no hesitation about the slaughter of Oreb and Zeeb; nor was tenderness to the vanquished enjoined in the Mosaic code. It was reserved for Jesus Christ to teach men the duties of pity and humanity to the world at large.

20. *unto Jether his firstborn*] Possibly to add disgrace to their death from its taking place by the hand of a boy. The incident of the boy's refusal is at once natural and unlikely to have been an after invention.

21. *Then Zebah and Zalmunna said*] These chiefs, whatever their crimes may have been, at least died with a manly dignity.

ornaments] Cf. Numb. xxxi. 48—54. From the word for *moon* in Syriac and Arabic we learn that these were crescent-shaped ornaments. They are still used among the Arabs, and are often worn on the forehead. A full account of similar articles of dress will be found in Lane's *Modern Egypt*, Pt. II. App. A. The use of the crescent as the symbol of the Ottoman power is still more widely known among us. It was the ancient Byzantine emblem, and is no doubt connected with the worship of the horned Astarte (Ashtaroth Karnaim) or Venus.

us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon 23
said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you. And 24
Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For

24—32. GIDEON'S CONDUCT AFTER THE VICTORY, AND HIS DEATH.

22. *Rule thou over us*] Though the word king is not used, yet the power offered was virtually kingly, since it was to be hereditary. This offer throws light upon the origin of kingly power. In early times, when men had to fight for existence, valour and conduct were frequently hereditary, for these qualities were then seldom corrupted by flattery or luxury. Thus the Israelites, in the first excitement of their extraordinary deliverance from the most terrible visitation they had yet experienced (it seems to have closely resembled the incursions of the Danes in our own history), were disposed to throw themselves at the feet of their deliverer. And though he steadfastly resisted their solicitations, yet the renown of his name extended to his family, as we learn from the history of Abimelech in the next chapter.

23. *And Gideon said unto them*] Justice has hardly been done to this almost unique spectacle of self-abnegation. We may look almost in vain for historical parallels to it. Moses and Joshua might have made themselves kings, but they were never invited to do so. Cincinnatus returned quietly to his farm when his dictatorship ended, but it was never offered to him as an hereditary dignity. Cæsar's refusal of the crown was dictated by policy rather than principle. The same may be said of Oliver Cromwell. To Washington the opportunity of founding a dynasty was never given. Gideon had no prudential reasons for declining, for the country (*v.* 28) is said to have remained undisturbed under his rule for forty years. The possibility of the establishment of kingly power had been foreseen and provided for by Moses (Deut. xvii. 14—20). But Gideon, with noble disinterestedness, refused to alter the constitution of his country, and to run the risk of causing heart-burnings and ultimate divisions among his countrymen. A republic it had been from the first, under the guidance of an Unseen Monarch. That fidelity to Him would secure success, peace and prosperity, Israel had just had a convincing proof. Therefore he declined to put himself in the place of the Great King Who had so lately shewn His will and power to protect His people. Gideon's conduct here displays not only disinterestedness, but faith of a high order. That his faith (*v.* 27) was not perfect is only another way of saying that he, like every one else, was not free from the weaknesses incident to humanity.

24. *earrings*] or perhaps *nose*-rings, which are worn now in Africa. See Art. *Ornaments* in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. But the former is more probable, and is the rendering of the ancient versions.

they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.)
25 And they answered, We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the ear-
26 rings of his prey. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that

because they were Ishmaelites] The reason here given for the possession of the rings by the children of the East does not seem very clear at first sight. But we learn from Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28, xxxix. 1, that the nomad tribes of Arabia, the "children of the east," were called indifferently Ishmaelites and Midianites, both (Gen. xxv. 2, 4, 6, 12—15) being descendants of Abraham; and that they were also the traders of the East, who went down into Egypt with their spices and balsams, and received instead gold and silver. The precious metals, however, were also found in Arabia (cf. Gen. iii. 11, x. 29, and xxv. 18). See Burton, *Gold Mines of Midian*, ch. ix., *Land of Midian*, ch. iv.

25. *a garment*] The *hyke* or outer garment, which was a kind of shawl or blanket. The original has the article, which implies that this was the usual way of measuring out the more valuable spoil.

26. *a thousand and seven hundred*] The shekel weighed about 253 grains, or rather more than twice the weight of an English sovereign. See Art. by Mr Madden, in *Variorum Teacher's Bible*. Thus the value of these rings, without including the other ornaments, was about £3400 of our money—a large amount. The Bedaween of the present day are less luxurious, though we read that "the ornaments are bracelets, collars, ear and nose-rings of gold, silver, or silver-gilt." Burton, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, p. 376.

ornaments] Rather, *the* ornaments. See note on *v.* 21.

collars] Rather **the drops**. They were precisely the same as many of the pendants to modern ear-rings, and though possibly often set with pearls, need not have consisted of them at all. Gesenius compares the word to the Greek σταλάγμιον (compare our *stalagmite*) from σταλάζω, to drop, distil. In the sense of ornaments, however, this is only found in the Latin author Plautus:

inauris da mihi
Faciunda[s] pondo duôm nummûm stalagmia.
Menæchmi III. 3.

Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, I. 4, gives us a description of the Persian king Pherozes with a highly-prized pearl of rare size and whiteness hanging from his right ear.

purple raiment] Literally, *garments of purple*. The far-famed Tyrian dye, of which the classical authors from Homer downward, make such frequent mention (see for instance Virg. *Georg.* III. 17; Juv. *Sat.* VII. 134), was obtained from the shores of the Mediterranean, near Dor. See note on ch. i. 27.

chains] Or *neck ornaments*, *collars*. Cf. Prov. i. 9; Cant. iv. 9.

were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which *thing* became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

They adorn the necks of these animals with a band of cloth or of leather upon which are strung small shells called cowries. To these the Sheiks add ornaments of silver, so that, even in the present day, they would form a valuable prize to the spoiler. Wellsted, *Travels*, I. 301.

27. *And Gideon made an ephod*] The ephod was the outer sleeveless garment of the high-priest, and corresponded in many respects to the *tunicle* of the mediaeval ecclesiastical vestments. See the description of the ephod in Exod. xxviii. 6—12. Here it appears to have been a *fac-simile* in gold of the priestly vestment, though some have supposed it to have been of the usual material, embroidered in gold in the most costly manner. Gideon's devotion to God appears to have been sincere and earnest. He desired to offer Him the choicest of the spoil. But like many other good men, he appears to have been unable to worship Him except in a visible form, with the usual, in fact the universal result, the gradual but certain deterioration of the moral and spiritual instincts of those who so worship Him. The evil effects of example may be traced here. In the neighbouring tribe of Ephraim worship of this kind had been for some time in existence. See ch. xvii. 5. "So long had God been a stranger to Israel, that now superstition goes current for devout worship." "Never man meant better than Gideon in his rich ephod; yet this very act set all Israel on whoring." Bishop Hall.

put it] Rather, **set it up.**

a whoring] Whether we are to understand this word literally, or to suppose it to have related to the spiritual fornication so often spoken of by the prophets, which consisted in offering to another the adoration due to Jehovah alone, we are not informed. But by what follows it seems probable that when once a visible symbol of Jehovah was set up, the temptation to honour it with rites borrowed from the heathen was irresistible. Compare the worship of the golden calf in Exod. xxxii., as well as the sin of Jeroboam in 1 Kings xii. But like that of Micah (ch. xvii.), this was unquestionably a worship of Jehovah, though under the form of the priestly dress consecrated to His service. Cf. ch. vi. 25—32. We can hardly suppose that Gideon would introduce Baal-worship after such an act.

28. *subdued*] See note on ch. iii. 30.

forty years] The frequent recurrence of this number (with eighty and twenty) suggests that it is rather an approximation to an exact date, than the exact date itself.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his
30 own house. And Gideon had three score and ten sons of
31 his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son,
32 whose name he called Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

33—35. *Renewed Apostasy of Israel.*

33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the

29. *Jerubbaal*] The name Jerubbaal here implies that Gideon was renowned all his life as the man who had thrown down the altar of Baal.

30. *he had many wives*] The gratitude of his countrymen clearly had given him the means to live in opulence, though he had declined the crown.

31. *concubine*] The name *pilegesh* denotes a wife of inferior station, like Hagar in Gen. xvi. 1. Her name, according to Josephus, was Drumah.

Abimelech] Vanity and ostentation seem to have laid hold of Gideon in his old age. By the unusual word *set* instead of *called*, which we find in the original, is most probably (see 2 Kings xvii. 34; Neh. ix. 7) meant the giving a surname. The name Abimelech (my father a king) seems to suggest some hankering after the dignity which in wiser hours he had declined. And Abimelech's after career would lead us to the supposition that he had been nurtured in such vain aspirations. Some commentators have supposed that Abimelech gave himself this name, or that it was given him by his mother's friends. But the whole construction of verses 30—32 implies that it was Gideon's act. The words, however, may be translated "father of a king," in which case the name was only indicative of Gideon's prognostications of Abimelech's future greatness.

32. *died in a good old age*] Cf. Gen. xv. 15, xxv. 8. The word translated *old age* is literally *greyness of head*.

in the sepulchre of Joash his father] It is perhaps one of the minute touches indicative of the genuineness of the narrative, that here for the first time, now that the Israelites had been some time in the land of Canaan, do we hear of family burial-places. We may compare Josh. xxiv. 30, where Joshua is spoken of as being buried within the boundary of his own inheritance, clearly intimating that the choice of a sepulchre, in his case, had then to be made, as well as the fact that it was a suitable and natural one.

33—35. Renewed Apostasy of Israel.

33. *as soon as Gideon was dead*] The personal influence of a great man was sufficiently strong to retain Israel in the right way while he

children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children 34
of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, 35
namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

CH. IX. 1—6. *Abimelech's usurpation.*

And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem 9

lived. But the principles of their austere and pure religion were not sufficiently rooted to enable them, without such aid, to withstand the seductions of the Phoenician worship.

Baal-berith] i.e. Baal *of the covenant;* either (1) Baal the god of covenants, or (2) Baal with whom they had entered into covenant. See *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. *Baal*. The downward steps of Israel to this worship may be clearly traced in the history of Micah and the Danites in chs. xvii., xviii. It began by the substitution of image worship for the ritual of the law, and ended by the substitution of Baal for Jehovah. Dr Cassel, however, thinks (3) that Baal-berith was the god of the covenant into which, contrary to the express command of Jehovah, the Israelites had entered with the Canaanites. Hengstenberg (4) supposes that a worship of Jehovah with the rites of Baal is meant —disobedience to the covenant in the garb of faithfulness.

35. *Jerubbaal*, namely, *Gideon*] Perhaps, better, **Jerubbaal-Gideon**, the two names being here conjoined, the one to denote the man, the other the acts for which he deserved to be remembered in Israel.

CH. IX. 1—6. ABIMELECH'S USURPATION.

1. *Shechem*] This city was marked out by its situation as well as its previous history, as one of the chief cities of Israel. Its situation between Ebal and Gerizim, in a valley of rare beauty, has attracted the notice even of travellers such as Dr Petermann, who seem generally somewhat inaccessible to the charms of natural scenery. Canon Tristram and Dr Thomson (*Land and The Book*, p. 470) both describe it in glowing language. And when we consider its antecedents at this period, we may well confess that no Jew, however obtuse, could regard them with absolute indifference. For here God first appeared to Abraham in the land promised to him so long before, and now occupied by his descendants (Gen. xii. 6), and here his first altar was built. Here Jacob bought the second piece of ground possessed by his family in the land hereafter to be inhabited by his descendants (Gen. xxxiii. 18, 20). Here was the fierce revenge taken by his sons for the insult offered to their sister's honour (Gen. xxxiv.). Here (see also note on *v.* 6) did Jacob renew the covenant which his fathers had made with God (Gen. xxxv. 4). Here Joshua (Josh. viii. 32) wrote the "copy of the law" which he had been ordered

unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, 3 saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether *is* better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I *am*

to inscribe between Gerizim and Ebal, and the writing was no doubt fresh and clear in the days of Abimelech. Here, too, though Israel had possibly in Abimelech's days no desire to recal *this* incident too clearly (see *vv.* 4, 46), did the aged chieftain make his last fervent appeal to the people to stand firm to the covenant which God had made with them (Josh. xxiv.). In after history it retained much of its importance. We hear of it in the N.T. under the name Sychar. And under the name of Nablous (Neapolis) it is still one of the most flourishing towns of Central Palestine, and is the seat of the Samaritan worship.

2. *the men of Shechem*] Rather, the *lords* (Hebrew *Baals*) of Shechem. They have been thought to be (1) the Canaanitish inhabitants, (2) the citizens of the town generally. We must dismiss (1) from the fact that the Ephraimites (in which tribe Shechem was situate) had reduced the Canaanites to a position of vassalage (Josh. xvi. 10, xvii. 13) instead of destroying them utterly, and we do not hear, whatever the subjection of Israel under the power of other nations, that the Canaanites ever recovered their supremacy. Thus it appears most likely (3) that the lords of Shechem were the *Israelite* inhabitants, just as for a long period in our own history the barons were almost exclusively of Norman descent. This view derives additional probability from the fact that Abimelech would hardly have made use of his kindred to obtain sovereignty in Shechem had they not been of the ruling class (see *v.* 1). Nor could he have said in any other case "I am your bone and your flesh." Nor does Jotham's contemptuous reference to Abimelech's mother (*v.* 18) prove any more than Michal's equally contemptuous reference to David's other wives (see Blunt's *Coincidences*, Pt. II. VII.) in 2 Sam. vi. 20; cf. 22. A princess of our own day might possibly use similar language of her maids of honour if an attempt were made to place them on an equality with herself. For the expression see ch. xx. 5; also Josh. xxiv. 11.

reign over you] Rather, **rule**. Some commentators have doubted whether Gideon's sons could have ruled over or even aspired to rule over the people of Israel, as thus implied. But we may compare the authority exercised by the sons of Jair (ch. x. 4) and the sons of Samuel (1 Sam. viii. 1). No doubt the respect in which Gideon was held, and the position that respect secured for him, gained a similar one for his sons. Though their position was not a strictly regal one, yet it was doubtless one of great authority and influence. And Abimelech, as the son of a wife of lower social position (see note on ch. viii. 31), was incensed that he was not permitted to share this authority, and no doubt in his language to the people of Shechem exaggerated, as is usual in such

your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake 3
of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these
words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for
they said, He *is* our brother. And they gave him three- 4
score and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith,
wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which
followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Oph- 5
rah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, *being*
threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding
yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he
hid himself. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, 6
and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech
king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

cases, the extent of the power which he was not permitted to share. Had Gideon's sons not exercised such authority, it is very difficult to see the force of Abimelech's argument that he should be made king, or rather ruler.

3. *men*] Rather, **lords**, as above. And so throughout the chapter.

4. *out of the house of Baal-berith*] Temple treasures (says Bertheau) were frequently applied to political purposes (see 1 Kings xv. 18; 2 Kings xviii. 15, 16).

vain and light persons] The first word is the "Raca" of the Sermon on the Mount, and signifies *empty*. The second, derived from a word signifying *to boil up*, is rather *violent*, or *furious*, than *light*. The idea is of men entirely without principle, and ready for any desperate undertaking, like the famous Free Companies in the Middle Ages, or the soldiers of fortune who hired themselves out to fight in the Thirty Years' War. A vivid picture of the last will be found in *Wallenstein's Lager*, by Schiller, and a far too favourable one in Sir Walter Scott's Dugald Dalgetty.

5. *threescore and ten persons*] Although Jotham is immediately afterwards excepted, the Hebrew states that threescore and ten persons were slain. This is the usual Hebrew mode of expression (cf. 1 Sam. xvi. 10). Nothing is more common in the East than such massacres of the reigning family. We read of them in Scripture again in 1 Kings xv. 29; 2 Kings x. 6 and xi. 1. In later history we may find a striking parallel in the massacre of the Ommiad race (see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. lii.), with its *one* survivor. Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, ch. viii., has palliated conduct like this by the maxim that it is more politic to exercise cruelty at once than to allow oneself to be driven to it by circumstances which will certainly arise. So Dido excuses herself for a very much slighter offence:

> Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
> Moliri. Virg. *Aen.* I. 562.

6. *Millo*] A name for a rampart; so called because it consisted of walls *filled in* with stones and earth. Cf. 2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Kings ix. 15.

7—21. *Jotham's appeal.*

7 And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in
the top of mount Gerizim, and lift up his voice, and cried,
and said unto them, Hearken unto me, you men of Shechem,
8 that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on
a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the
9 olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto
them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they

made Abimelech king] Apparently only of Shechem and the neighbourhood; but perhaps of the whole tribe of Ephraim.

the plain of the pillar] Rather, **the oak of the pillar**, or **monument**, i.e. the stone set up by Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 26; cf. Gen. xxxv. 4). This stone, like many another memorial, was now put to uses sadly different from those which it was intended to serve.

7—21. JOTHAM'S APPEAL.

7. *Gerizim*] The mount upon which the blessings commanded by Moses (Deut. xi. 29, and xxvii. 12) were to be recited. See also Josh. viii. 33. Shechem lay at its base. It was afterwards famous as the site of the celebrated temple erected by the Samaritans in rivalry with that at Jerusalem (St John iv. 20). It rises to a height of 2848 feet above the Mediterranean. "The long backbone of Palestine—its bisecting mountain range—is here cleft in twain, and a deep valley, in places scarcely more than 500 yards wide, is sunk 800 feet below the enclosing mountains of Ebal to the north and Gerizim to the south." Tristram, *Bible Places*, 181. Travellers tell us that the voice of persons speaking on Gerizim can be distinctly heard on Ebal, and therefore of course in the intervening space. See Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, II. 209; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 149.

that God may hearken] Or, *and God will hearken.*

8. *The trees went forth*] Cf. 2 Kings xiv. 9. This, the first parable recorded in Scripture, is in accordance with almost an universal fashion in the infancy of nations, in which lessons were usually inculcated in a figurative form, bringing the imagination, which is usually earlier developed, to the aid of the reason. The parable is still largely in use among Oriental nations. Its employment so frequently by our Lord is at once a sign of His desire to be understood by the simplest of mankind, and a cause of the ready acceptance of His doctrine among the poor and uneducated. We need not suppose, as some of the Rabbis have done, that particular persons (as Othniel, Deborah, Gideon) are here indicated, to whom the sovereignty was offered in turn, but rather to understand the general principle, that only self-seeking and worthless men sought such an honour, and that their schemes of aggrandisement could only end in strife and bloodshed. On the contrary, honourable, useful, and influential men, typified by the olive, fig, and vine respectively, alike declined the perilous dignity of the crown.

honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abime-

9. *they honour God and man*] "His oil consecrates kings and priests and feeds the light which burns in the sanctuary of God" (Cassel). See Exod. xxvii. 20, xxix. 7, xxx. 22—33; Levit. viii. 2, xxiv. 2.

go to be promoted] The word means literally to move unsteadily about; to *stagger*, as in Ps. cvii. 27, to *shake*, as the leaves of a tree, Is. vii. 2. Here it refers to the instability of worldly greatness, or perhaps, as some suppose, to the distractions and cares of royalty. So in verses 11 and 13.

11. *fruit*] Perhaps rather *produce*.

13. *wine*] Heb. *tirosh*. This word is rendered *wine* 26 times and *new wine* 11 times in our version. See Hos. iv. 4, where it is specially distinguished from wine. Also note on ch. xiii. 4.

God and man] This is a strong poetic hyperbole. It cannot be understood literally, save so far as we may believe that God rejoiceth in the gladness of His creatures, when it is innocent.

14. *bramble*] Heb. *Atad*. The species is not correctly ascertained, but Canon Tristram (*Land of Israel*, p. 149) says that the bramble is to be found in the neighbourhood of Shechem, clinging to the rocks, and that this, with the olives and figs growing in the valley, must have given point to Jotham's parable. The *thistle* of the margin must be given up. The trees could hardly "put their trust in its shadow."

15. *let fire come out of the bramble*] The application of this is to be seen in *v.* 20. The consequence of setting a worthless person like Abimelech over them would be misery to persons better than himself. "Thorns easily catch fire" (Keil, who refers to Exod. xxii. 6). And so the worst men are the most certain causes of mischief.

cedars of Lebanon] The noblest trees in Palestine. See Ps. xxix. 5, lxxx. 10, civ. 16; Ezek. xxxi. 3—9. They are gradually disappearing now, though they may still be found in the more inaccessible parts of the Lebanon range. See Tristram, *Land of Israel*, pp. 625, 631.

lech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving
17 of his hands; (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian:
18 and ye are risen up against my father's house *this* day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he *is* your brother;)
19 if ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and
20 let him also rejoice in you: but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.
21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

22—33. *Gaal's conspiracy.*

22 When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, then
23

16. *sincerely*] Rather, **fairly**, the original idea being that of perfection (so the LXX.) or blamelessness. So below, *v.* 19.

Jerubbaal] The name which was given to Gideon in commemoration of his boldness in destroying the altar of Baal, is here naturally preferred to any other name.

deserving] The word sometimes has this sense, but perhaps it is better here *labour*.

17. *adventured his life far*] The Hebrew is very vivid, *caused to cast his life from before*, i.e. *flung it away*, exposed it as a thing of no value.

18. *maid-servant*] See notes on ch. viii. 31, ix. 2.

20. *but if not*] The event would shew whether they had done so or not. Nor was it long delayed.

let fire come out from the men of Shechem] Here Jotham in his application enlarges upon his parable.

21. *to Beer*] As *Beer* signifies *well*, it is by no means surprising that there are several places mentioned in Scripture with such a name, and that this place cannot be identified. There is a Beeroth (wells) mentioned in Josh. ix. 17, xviii. 25 as within the limits of the tribe of Benjamin.

22—33. GAAL'S CONSPIRACY.

22. *When*] Rather, **and**.

had reigned] Lit. *princed*, i.e. held sway as a prince or chieftain. The sacred writer here appears to imply that though he was

God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: that the cruelty *done* to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren. And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along *that* way by them: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. And they went out *into* the fields,

24 25 26 27

called a king, he was in reality but a petty prince or chieftain. The tense in the original is the simple historical one, "and Abimelech reigned."

23. *Then*] Rather, **and.** There are no precise marks of time in the original.

God sent an evil spirit] Everything that happens by God's permission is said to be done by Him in these historical books, a fact which may serve to explain many difficulties. In a sense it is perfectly true. From the day of Adam's fall, God's laws provided for the evolution from sin of its own dire effects, among which were its connection with similar rebellion on a vaster scale beyond this earth, of which Scripture gives us hints, but into which it does not fully enter. See 1 Sam. xvi. 14, xviii. 10. Also 1 Kings xxii. 21, 23.

24. *cruelty*] Or, *violence.* So Luther. Or we may translate with the LXX., *injustice, wrong.* Wiclif renders *hidows gilt.*

aided him] Lit. as margin, *strengthened his hands.*

25. *for him*] Not perhaps for him personally, but in consequence of his conduct, and to revenge themselves for it. Bad, oppressive government is universally the parent of brigandage, as we may see in our own days. And this is especially the case when the power or the will are lacking to put it down. Abimelech seems to have possessed the latter, but, as the event proved, not the former. Still, as it is evident, not only that he regarded this brigandage as a reproach to his government, but that the lords of Shechem knew that he would do so, Abimelech, with all his ambition and cruelty, could hardly have been a tyrant of the worst description, but must be credited at least with some sense of the moral responsibility required in a ruler. He does not, however, appear to have taken action until the brigandage took the form of organized opposition to him personally. See next verse.

26. *Gaal the son of Ebed*] Nothing further is known of Gaal than what we read in this chapter.

went over] Apparently they crossed from the hill-tops in Shechem as they grew bolder by impunity.

put their confidence] Rather, **put confidence.**

and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made merry, and went *into* the house of their god, and did
28 eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *is* not *he* the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of
29 Shechem: for why should we serve him? And would to God this people were under my hand; then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine
30 army, and come out. And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was
31 kindled. And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily,

27. *made merry*] Rather, made **songs of rejoicing**. Heb. *hilloolim;* compare *Hallelujah* and the *Hallel* of the later Hebrews; also our own *halloo*. It would seem by a comparison of Levit. xix. 23, 24, where the same word occurs, that the feast which Moses had ordained was now kept in honour, not of Jehovah, but of Baal-berith. See next note. All nations, however, have been accustomed to keep festival at vintage-time. Compare the festivals of Bacchus among the Romans and Dionysus among the Greeks, when the utmost licence was permitted; also Is. xvi. 10; Jer. xxv. 30.

their god] An incidental, but very significant allusion to the completeness with which the worship of Jehovah had been abandoned by the lords of Shechem.

28. *officer*] Lit. *overseer*, or *inspector*.

serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem] See Gen. xxxiii. 19, and xxxiv. This passage is difficult. If we translate (1) as our version does, following the Masoretic text, we must understand the meaning to be "we might as well serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem," i. e. the Canaanites, who, as we have seen, were the vassals of the lords of Shechem. But (2) the LXX. translates *Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer his servant, with the men of Hamor the father of Shechem?* Or (3) we may translate, with the Chaldee, *Do not the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his officer serve the men of Hamor?* These two last translations recognize the fact that *we* is emphatic, a point which our translators have missed. The second translation gives the best sense, on the whole. The Vulgate and Luther render by a paraphrase.

29. *would to God*] Lit. *who will give*, i. e. *would that*. God's Name is not introduced.

30. *ruler*] The word is the same as in *v.* 22, where see note.

31. *privily*] Some commentators prefer the marginal reading "in Tormah." But had this been the true rendering we should have had "to," not "in," Tormah. The Alexandrian MS. of the LXX. renders "μετὰ δώρων," but this is clearly a mistake, perhaps, however, for μετὰ δόλου, which is the translation of some ancient versions.

saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and behold, they fortify the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that 32
is with thee, *and* lie in wait in the field: and it shall be, *that* 33
in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

34—45. *Gaal's defeat.*

And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with 34
him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem *in* four companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood 35
in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait. And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, 36
there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as *if they were* men. And Gaal spake again and said, 37
See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim. Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy 38
mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we

fortify] Rather, **are stirring up.** Hence the necessity for prompt measures, such as Zebul goes on to recommend.

33. *set upon*] Lit. *spread out upon*, spoken of the deploying into battle array of troops cooped up in ambush. See *v.* 44 and ch. xx. 37.

34—45. GAAL'S DEFEAT.

34. *companies*] See ch. vii. 16, note.

35. *entering*] Lit. *door.*

36. *Thou seest the shadow*] Zebul's object is to lull the suspicions of the fool-hardy Gaal until it is too late to close the gates of the city and offer effectual resistance.

37. *middle*] The LXX. and Vulgate render *navel*, as margin. But Gesenius and the Targum render *elevated portion.*

plain of Meonenim] The word translated *plain* is properly *oak. Meonenim* is the participle of a verb signifying to use occult arts. Hence the proper translation is **the oak of the sorcerers.**

38. *Then said Zebul*] The near approach of Abimelech's troops enabled Zebul to throw off the mask, for he knew that Gaal would have difficulty enough in collecting his adherents to meet Abimelech, without wasting time in strife with himself.

should serve him? *is* not this the people that thou hast de-
39 spised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. And Gaal
went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abime-
40 lech. And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him,
and many were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the
41 entering of the gate. And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah:
and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that *they* should
42 not dwell in Shechem. And it came to pass on the mor-
row, that the people went out *into* the field; and they told
43 Abimelech. And he took the people, and divided them
into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked,
and behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city;
44 and he rose up against them, and smote them. And Abi-
melech, and the company that *was* with him, rushed forward,
and stood *in* the entering of the gate of the city: and the
two *other* companies ran upon all *the people* that *were* in
45 the fields, and slew them. And Abimelech fought against

40. *chased*] Rather, **pursued.** The action was rather a rout than a battle. Gaal's hastily gathered band was no match for Abimelech's more disciplined army, so Gaal's men took to flight at the very commencement of the action.

and many were overthrown and *wounded*, even *unto the entering of the gate*] Rather, **and there fell many wounded, up to the door of the gate.** That is, Abimelech pursued them as far as the gate. Possibly he may have feared to trust his men in the narrow streets of an Oriental city, fearing the fate which eventually befel him. He left the city in Zebul's hands, and withdrew for the night, intending to take further vengeance on the morrow.

41. *dwelt at Arumah*] Rather, **abode**, i.e. for that night. Arumah is not again mentioned, but from what follows it must have been just outside the city.

and Zebul thrust out] Zebul was enabled to expel Gaal and the men who had fought on his side, but the temper of the city was nevertheless such that it would not have been wise for Abimelech to enter.

42. *into the field*] They went out to their ordinary work, evidently presuming that with the expulsion of Gaal's adherents all was at an end. But Abimelech's revenge was not so easily satiated.

43. *were come*] Rather, **were coming**. The meaning appears to be that as soon as the people began to go about their daily business in the fields, Abimelech posted his ambush. He then watched, and as more and more of the population came out, commenced the attack.

44. *rushed forward*] See note on *v.* 33, where the word is translated "set upon." In the latter part of this verse it is translated "ran upon."

the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it *with* salt.

46—57. *Abimelech's further campaign and death.*

And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard 46
that, they entered into a hold of the house of the god Berith. And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of 47
the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And 48
Abimelech gat him up *to* mount Zalmon, he and all the people that *were* with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his shoulder, and said unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, *and* do as I *have done*. And all the people likewise cut down 49
every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all

45. *sowed it with salt*] Not, as some commentators have thought, in order to make it unfruitful, for the operation must have been carried on upon a somewhat large scale to have brought about such a result, but to indicate that it should be desolate for ever, like the well-known salt desert beside the Dead Sea. But the difference between Abimelech's pseudo prophecy here and Joshua's denunciation against Jericho (Josh. vi. 26) is very remarkable at the present time. Shechem is still a tolerably flourishing town. Jericho is a collection of dirty huts.

46—57. ABIMELECH'S FURTHER CAMPAIGN AND DEATH.

46. *the men of the tower of Shechem*] Lit. *the lords of the tower of Shechem*. Probably the dwellers in the keep, or rather citadel, apparently some of the chief among the lords.

hold] The meaning of this word, which only occurs here and in 1 Sam. xiii. 6 (where it is translated *high places*), signifies something lofty in height, whether artificial, as here, or natural, as in the other passage cited. There it no doubt signifies the topmost portions of almost inaccessible rocks. Here it means the upper chambers of a lofty tower.

47. *were gathered together*] Not, in this case, with a hostile purpose, as in the A. V., ch. iv. 13, vi. 33 (where the words are not the same as here), but for refuge.

48. *Zalmon*] Cf. Ps. lxviii. 15. This is supposed to be Jebel Suleimân, south of Gerizim.

an axe] Lit. *the axes*, i. e. for himself and others, he being supposed to do what they did, because he commanded it. This is an example of what is called *constructio praegnans* in grammar.

49. *hold*] See above, *v.* 46.

the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against
51 Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut *it* to them, and gat them up to
52 the top of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the
53 tower to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake
54 his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that *men* say not of me, A woman slew him. And his

50. *Thebez*] Eusebius and Jerome, in the Onomasticon (see also Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, II. 317; Ritter, *Geography of Palestine*, II. 341), identify this with Tubâs, thirteen miles north of Shechem. The latest explorers (see Conder's *Handbook*, and Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 196) confirm this view. No doubt the inhabitants of Thebez formed part of Abimelech's kingdom, and had been implicated in Gaal's rebellion.

51. *a strong tower*] Lit. *a tower of strength*. See note on *v.* 46.

they of the city] Rather, **the lords of the city**. See note on *v.* 2.

to the top] Rather, **upon the roof**. See ch. xvi. 27, and Josh. ii. 6, 8.

52. *hard unto*] The meaning is **close** unto, as in the well-known phrase "hard by." See Ps. lxiii. 8; Acts xviii. 7, &c.

to burn it with fire] Thus repeating his successful attempt to storm the stronghold at Shechem, but with a very different result.

53. *a piece of a millstone*] Heb. *a millstone rider*, i.e. what is called in English the *runner*, the upper millstone, which revolves, while the lower is fixed. The nether millstone is mentioned in Job xli. 24 (Heb. 16).

all to brake] That is, *completely* broke (*fractured*, Heb.). See Nares' Glossary (Halliwell and Wright's Ed.):

> In the various bustle of resort
> Were all to-ruffled and sometimes impaired.
> Milton, *Comus*, 380.

Compare the German *zu* in composition.

his skull] Heb. *Gulgaltho*, for the more usual *Gulgoltho*. Readers of the English New Testament will not fail to recognize the familiar *Golgotha* of Matt. xxvii. 33. The original meaning is anything rounded. Compare Gilgal. See the allusion to this incident in 2 Sam. xi. 21.

54. *that men say not of me*] An instance of "the ruling passion strong in death." Abimelech had been a warrior, and lived among warriors, and dreaded above all the reproach of dying by a woman's

young man thrust him through, and he died. And when 55
the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they de-
parted every man unto his place. Thus God rendered the 56
wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in
slaying his seventy brethren: and all the evil of the men of 57
Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them
came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

CH. X. 1—5. *The judgeship of Tola and Jair.*

And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola **10**

hand. Cf. ch. iv. 9. "So vaine fooles are niggardly of their reputation and prodigall of their soules." Bp. Hall.

thrust him through] Compare the readiness of the young man to slay the petty king of Shechem with the feeling in reference to the choice of all Israel, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3; 2 Sam. i. 10, 14—16. "How much more beautiful is the tragical death of Saul! His attendant, influenced by reverence, refuses to kill him, and finally follows him in voluntary death. The songs of David cultivate his memory: Abimelech's epitaph is his brother Jotham's curse." Cassel.

57. *and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal*] It is the peculiarity of the Scripture narrative that it clearly discerns the finger of God in all that is done. No secondary causes are allowed to blind the eyes of the reader to the fact that a personal God is carrying on His moral government of the world. Nor is the observation on Jotham's curse an encouragement to superstitious views of the power of curses. Abimelech's curse on Shechem (see *v.* 45) "came home to roost." Abimelech and the men of Shechem were not destroyed because Jotham had cursed them, but because the curse was deserved. They had brought it upon themselves by their ingratitude and ill-doing, and it would have come upon them whether it had been pronounced by Jotham or not. We may observe again here that Jerubbaal, not Gideon, is the name given to Jotham's father, because it was not the man, but his deed, that the history desires to bring to our notice.

CH. X. **1—5.** THE JUDGESHIP OF TOLA AND JAIR.

1. *to defend*] Literally, to *save*. There is no need to imagine that Israel was reduced to the condition it was in when Gideon arose. It is sufficient to suppose that such a state of things would have taken place, had not a capable administrator arisen, who was placed at the head of affairs. The orderly condition of society resulting from his administration would of itself tend to keep marauders at a distance. The cessation of Danish incursions (save in the case of a disputed succession) between Alfred and Ethelred the Unready in our own annals supplies us with a case in point. Kings like Edgar may be said to have "saved" England from the incursions of the Danes, even though no very formidable landing occurred in their reigns.

the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and
2 he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim. And he judged
Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in
Shamir.
3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel
4 twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that rode on
thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called
Havoth-jair unto this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead.
5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

Tola the son of Puah] Nothing more is known of either of these, save that their names appear to have been family names in the tribe of Issachar. See Gen. xlvi. 13 (and margin).

Dodo] The ancient versions all translate *of his uncle*, which is correct as far as the Hebrew goes, but is absurd here. The Vulgate supplies *Abimelech* from the first part of the verse. But Abimelech was not of the tribe of Issachar. The fact is that Dodo was not an uncommon proper name. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 9; 1 Chron. xi. 12.

a man of Issachar] The organic unity of Israel, though it had been disturbed, was not yet broken up.

Shamir] All that is known of this is that it could not be identical with the Shamir of Josh. xv. 48, which was in Judah.

3. *Jair, a Gileadite*] Literally, *the* Gileadite. Here again we see that in spite of the conduct of the Israelites beyond Jordan to Gideon, the unity of Israel was, as yet, not altogether destroyed. The first to feel the effects of national disintegration would be the tribes beyond Jordan.

4. *Havoth-Jair*] See Numb. xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14. There is no contradiction between the two statements. No doubt the distinguished position of the sons of the judge caused an old name to be revived. It is not said that they were *first* called Havoth-Jair from this cause, but that it was for this reason that they *continued* to be called so until the time that this book was written. *Havoth* signifies villages (properly *living* places). Jair the son of Manasseh appears to have inherited a place in the tribe of Manasseh through the female line, like the children of Zelophehad (Numb. xxxvi., Josh. xvii. 2—6), for we find from 1 Chron. ii. 22 that he was of Judah by the father's side. Hence the explanation of the otherwise inexplicable phrase, "Judah upon Jordan," in Josh. xix. 34 (cf. Matt. xix. 1, and Josephus, *Antiq.* XII. 4, 11).

5. *Camon*] Nothing further is known of this place, though it may be Jokneam of Carmel (Josh. xii. 22; 1 Kings iv. 12, where we have *Jokmeam*), for this has been identified with the Cammona of Eusebius and Jerome, the Cyamon of Judith vii. 3, now Tell-el-Kaimun, on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel. It is not at all improbable that Jair, after he became judge, found it more convenient to reside on the western side of the Jordan, and that he was buried where he had lived.

6—9. *Renewed apostasy of Israel.*

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight 6
of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the
gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab,
and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of
the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.
And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and 7
he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into
the hands of the children of Ammon. And that year they 8
vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years,
all the children of Israel that *were* on the *other* side Jordan
in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead. Moreover 9
the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also
against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house
of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

10—18. *The repentance of Israel and steps taken towards resistance.*

And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We 10

6—9. RENEWED APOSTASY OF ISRAEL.

6. *the gods of Syria*] We are not told what their names were, but they did not differ much from the gods of Phoenicia already mentioned. The gods of Sidon were Phoenician deities.

7. *was hot*] Or, *was kindled.*

8. *that year*] The year in which God "sold them into the hands" of their enemies. Probably also the year of Jair's death. The expression strongly suggests the idea that this history was compiled from a record like the Saxon Chronicle.

vexed and oppressed] Literally, *broke and crushed*, the latter term being an intensification of the former.

on the other side Jordan] These bore the brunt of the oppression, though (see next verse) it extended to a less degree over the whole of Israel. The Philistine oppression did not reach its height till the days of Samson.

the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead] Sihon and Og, the two monarchs whom Israel dispossessed on the other side Jordan, are said to have been Amorites (Numb. xxi. 31; Deut. iii. 8). Part of Gilead belonged to Og (Deut. iii. 13; Josh. xiii. 31), and was given to Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xiii. 25, 31). See also 1 Chron. v. 10, 16, 23. The first of these verses implies that the Reubenites had a nomadic colony in Gilead.

10—18. THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL AND STEPS TAKEN TOWARDS RESISTANCE.

10. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*] As in ch. iii. 9, 15, vi. 7.

have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our
11 God, and *also* served Baalim. And the LORD said unto the
children of Israel, *Did* not *I deliver you* from the Egyptians,
and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and
12 from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amale-
kites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to
13 me, and I delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have for-
saken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver
14 you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have
chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.
15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have
sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto
16 thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put
away the strange gods from among them, and served the
LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

Baalim] Literally, *the* Baalim, i.e. the various false gods mentioned *v.* 6.

11. Did *not* I deliver you?] The words added in our version are necessary to complete the sense, which is deficient in the original. The occasion of the deliverance from Egypt is well known. The deliverance from the Amorites relates to the overthrow of Sihon and Og (Numb. xxi., xxiv.). The children of Ammon joined the Moabites in their oppression (ch. iii. 13). The Philistines must have been invading southern Israel in the days of Shamgar (ch. iii. 31). The Zidonians must have joined in Jabin's tyranny (ch. iv. 2, 3), and this may have been the reason of Asher's abstinence from the conflict (ch. v. 17). The Amalekites joined Eglon (ch. iii. 15) and Midian (ch. vi. 3). Maon appears to be a mistake for Midian, a mistake which would be easily made in the earlier Hebrew letters such as we find on the Moabite stone. Some copies of the LXX. substitute *Canaan*, but without authority.

15. *And the children of Israel said*] As the conduct of Israel grows worse, the answer of Jehovah to their cries grows sterner. He is not content now with the expression of regret. He requires some visible sign that it is real. Not till His worship is duly re-established, and the worship of the wicked deities of Canaan abandoned, does He shew mercy to them. True repentance is ever discerned, not by words, but by deeds. Israel's *words* here were submissive enough. Had they not been followed by the return to the pure faith of their forefathers, they would have been uttered in vain.

16. *strange gods*] Perhaps better, with margin, *the gods of the stranger*.

his soul was grieved] Or, *impatient* (lit. *shortened*). This is one of the many instances of accommodation to human understanding in the way of speaking of God which are to be found in Scripture.

Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and 17
encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled
themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. And the 18
people *and* princes of Gilead said one to another, What man
is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon?
he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

CH. XI. 1—11. *Jephthah's antecedents and election to the leadership.*

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty *man* of valour, 11
and he *was* the son of a harlot: and Gilead begat Jeph-
thah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and *his* wife's sons 2
grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him,
Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art*
the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his 3

17. *were gathered together*] See note on ch. iv. 13.

encamped in Mizpeh] With repentance came fresh courage. Israel is gathered together to fight for her liberties, and only lacks a leader. Mizpeh, or Mizpah, according to the Hebrew, is the Ramath-mizpeh of Josh. xiii. 26. Vandevelde identifies it with Ramoth-gilead (Josh. xx. 8; cf. Deut. iv. 43; 1 Kings xxii. 3, &c.). But Ramath and Ramoth are common names, signifying height. And so is Mizpah, or Mizpeh, which signifies a watch tower. The latest explorers therefore distinguish between the two. There appears, however, little reason to doubt that this is the Mizpah of Gen. xxxi. 49. See also ch. xi. 29.

18. *the people* and *princes of Gilead*] Rather, **the people, the princes of Gilead**, the latter words being in apposition to, and added in explanation of, the former.

What man is he] Or, *who* is *the man?*

CH. XI. **1—11.** JEPHTHAH'S ANTECEDENTS AND ELECTION TO THE LEADERSHIP.

1. *Jephthah*] So the LXX. The Masorites read *Jiphthah*. See Josh. xix. 14.

a mighty man of valour] See ch. vi. 12; 2 Kings v. 1.

Gilead] Some have supposed that the land is personified in the person of Jephthah's father. But this is impossible from what follows in the next verse. Names often recurred in Jewish families. See note on Jair, ch. x. 3, and the genealogies in the book of Chronicles, especially chapters ii. and iv.

2. *they thrust out Jephthah*] Bertheau refers to Gen. xxi. 10, xxv. 6.

strange woman] Literally, *other* woman, but the term is not without a tinge of reproach. Compare the expression "other gods," ch. ii. 12,

brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were
4 gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. And
it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Am-
5 mon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when
the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders
of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:
6 and they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain,
7 that we may fight with the children of Ammon. And
Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me,
and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye
8 come unto me now when ye are in distress? And the
elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn
again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight
against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all
9 the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the
elders of Gilead, If ye bring me *home* again to fight against
the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before

and elsewhere. Jephthah's birth was plainly more questionable than that of Abimelech.

3. *in the land of Tob*] The words may be translated *in a good land*. But all the versions translate by a proper name, and *v.* 5 removes all doubt on the subject. Tob, according to 2 Sam. x. 6, 8, appears to have been a part of Syria adjacent to the north of Israel. See also 1 Macc. v. 13; 2 Macc. xii. 17, where, if the land of Tob be meant, it was occupied by the Jews at that time. It might have been the Hauran, which we are told is the best land in Syria.

vain men] See ch. ix. 4.

4. *in process of time*] Literally, *from*, i. e. *after*, *days*.

5. *when the children of Ammon made war*] That is, when the children of Israel had resolved to resist the incursions which they had borne for eighteen years. Compare ch. x. 8, with 18. With this agree the facts (1) that Jephthah was young when he was expelled from his father's house, and (2) that when he conducted his successful expedition against Ammon, he had a grown up daughter. See also *v.* 4.

6. *captain*] See Josh. x. 24, where the word first occurs. They were evidently originally military officers, though the term is applied apparently to civil rulers in Is. i. 10, iii. 6, 7.

7. *and expel me*] It is clear from this charge, and from the answer of the elders of Gilead, that they had power to have prevented the action of Jephthah's brothers. But Jephthah's mildness on this occasion, which contrasts with his usual temperament (cf. *vv.* 3, 30, and ch. xii. 4), indicates a consciousness that the stigma on his birth rendered it very difficult for them to have interfered. The regulation laid down in Deut. xxi. 15—17 did not apply to such a case as this.

9. *the Lord*] We see from ch. x. 16, that the worship of God, not in

me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said 10
unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do
not so according to thy words. Then Jephthah went with 11
the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and
captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words be-
fore the LORD in Mizpeh.

12—28. *Jephthah's negotiations.*

And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the 12
children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with
me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?
And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto 13
the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my
land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even
unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those

the general sense, but as Jehovah the covenant God of Israel, had been restored. Hence Jephthah says *Jehovah* here, not *Elohim*.

shall I be your head] The answer of the elders of Gilead seems to support the idea of those who would translate here **I will be your head.** The word "I" here is emphatic.

10. *be witness*] Literally, *is hearing*, thus implying their belief in an ever-present deity.

11. *all his words*] All that he had previously promised.

before the Lord] There is no reason to suppose that the tabernacle had been removed across Jordan. Both Jephthah and the elders of Gilead were well aware (see note on last verse) that Jehovah was present with them. And these words were therefore spoken solemnly, as in His presence. For Mizpeh see note on ch. x. 17.

12—28. JEPHTHAH'S NEGOTIATIONS.

12. *messengers*] The word is the same as that translated angel in ch. ii. 1.

What hast thou to do with me] Literally, *what to me and thee?*

my land] The newly-appointed head speaks in the name of the land of which he has been made head.

13. *from Arnon even unto Jabbok*] The Arnon (rushing stream) empties itself into the Dead Sea about midway down on the east side. See Numb. xxi. 13. The Jabbok (pourer, or emptier) rises in the mountains of Gilead, and empties itself into the Jordan near Zarthan (or Zaretan, see note on ch. vii. 22) and the city Adam (Josh. iii. 16). But how could Israel be said to have taken away this land? It was in the hands of Sihon (Numb. xxi. 24) when Israel took possession of it. But a more careful study of the passage just cited will disclose what affords a colourable pretext for the assertion of the king of Ammon, quite enough to serve his purpose, according to the usual morality of State Papers. We read in Numb. xxi. 26 that Sihon had taken this land

14 *lands* again peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers
15 again unto the king of the children of Ammon: and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the
16 land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: but when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the
17 wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto.* And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not con-
18 sent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the *other* side of Arnon,

from the Moabites. And from *v.* 24 (with which compare ch. iii. 13) Moab and Ammon appear at this time to have been one power. Josh. xiii. 24—26 moreover assigns some portion of the disputed land to the Ammonites. We learn from Is. xv. and Jer. xlviii. that Moab ultimately recovered this territory.

15. *Israel took not away*] They had received a special command not to do so, which, as Jephthah proceeds to shew, they scrupulously obeyed.

16. *walked*] Or, *went.*

unto the Red sea] See Numb. xiv. 25; Deut. i. 40, ii. 1.

Kadesh] Called also Kadesh-barnea, Josh. x. 41, xv. 3. It was between the wilderness of Zin and that of Paran. See Numb. xiii. 26, xx. 1, 16. Dean Stanley supposes it to be Petra, but it appears (Numb. xx. 22) to have been some distance from Mount Hor, whereas Petra lies at the foot of that mountain. Bartlett, a recent American explorer, following Rowlands, has supposed it to be Ain Gadis, which has been thought by some to be too far westward. Canon Tristram, however, in his latest work, as well as several other high authorities, supports Ain Gadis (*Bible Places*, p. 5).

17. *then Israel sent messengers*] This passage, down to the word "land," is evidently taken from Numb. xx. 14, 17. "Israel," however, being substituted for "Moses," "from Kadesh" being omitted, as well as a considerable portion of the appeal, and the first person singular being substituted for the first person plural.

would not hearken thereto] See Numb. xiv. 18—21.

unto the king of Moab] There is no mention of this embassy to Moab in the Pentateuch. But it is implied in Deut. ii. 9.

and Israel abode in Kadesh] A quotation. See Numb. xx. 1.

18. *compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab*] See Numb. xx. 22, xxi. 4, 13.

the other side of Arnon] Numb. xxi. 13.

but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto 19
Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass 20
through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his 21
people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed all the 22
coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the LORD 23
God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not 24
thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now *art* 25
thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her 26
towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that

for Arnon was *the border of Moab*] Rather is the border. A quotation of Numb. xxi. 13.

19. *unto Sihon king of the Amorites*] Another quotation from Numb. xxi. 21. Cf. Deut. ii. 26—32.

Let us pass] Again a quotation, Numb. xxi. 22.

20. *Sihon gathered*] This passage, to the end of the verse, is for the most part a literal quotation from the narrative in Numbers. Jephthah's message thus shews the Pentateuch to have been in existence in his day.

Jahaz] See Numb. xxi. 23; Is. xv. 4; Jer. xlviii. 21.

21. *they smote them*] Numb. xxi. 24, 25; Deut. ii. 33, 34.

22. *coasts*] See note on ch. i. 18.

the wilderness] The desert which lies on the east of this territory.

24. *Chemosh*] Chemosh (see note on ch. x. 6) was the god of Moab. But Moab and Ammon seem at this time to have been under a common rule.

25. *Balak the son of Zippor*] See Numb. xxii.—xxiv. and Deut. xxiii. 3, 4. Balak was full of suspicion and fear, but he did not accuse the Israelites, as his successors now did, of having taken his land.

26. *towns*] Literally, daughters, as in ch. i. 27.

Aroer] Aroer of Reuben, since Jephthah is speaking of the territory

be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why
27 therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge *this* day between the children of Israel and the children of
28 Ammon. Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

29—33. *Jephthah's vow and victory.*

29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto*
30 the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the
31 children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S and I will offer it up *for* a burnt
32 offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered
33 them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer,

near the Arnon. See Josh. xiii. 16, 17. It is to be distinguished from Aroer which is before Rabbah, Josh. xiii. 25, which was within the territory of Gad.

27. *the Lord the Judge be judge*] Or, **Jehovah, who judgeth, shall judge.**

29—33. JEPHTHAH'S VOW AND VICTORY.

29. *the spirit of the Lord*] See ch. iii. 10.

he passed over Gilead] He passed through the northern territory of Israel beyond Jordan to collect troops and then returned to his headquarters at Mizpeh.

30. *vowed a vow*] "It was his zeale to vow, it was his sinne to vow rashly." "Vowes are as they are made; like unto sents, if they be of ill composition, nothing offends more; if well tempered, nothing is more pleasant."—Bp Hall.

31. *and I will offer it up for a burnt offering*] There can be little doubt that Jephthah, in his eagerness, had in his mind a human sacrifice. The expression "that which cometh out of the doors of my house" could hardly have signified an animal. Therefore Jephthah no doubt had in his mind some one of his household, whom he probably expected would be ready to meet him on his return. He was terribly punished for his rash and cruel vow.

even till thou come *to* Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, *with* a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34—40. *The fate of Jephthah's daughter.*

And Jephthah came *to* Mizpeh unto his house, and be- 34
hold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he 35
saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, 36
My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD,

33. *Minnith*] This was probably a large corn-growing district in the Mishor, or table-land, east of Jordan. See Ezek. xxvii. 17.

even *twenty cities*] That is, he smote twenty cities.

the plain of the vineyards] Or rather **meadow** of the vineyards (Heb. *Abel Cheramim*). Cf. ch. vii. 22; 2 Chron. xvi. 4. Where this was is not known.

a very great slaughter] Literally, *smiting*.

subdued] See ch. iii. 30.

34—40. THE FATE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

34. *his house*] Thus we learn that a suitable residence at Mizpeh had been placed at the disposal of their leader by the men of Gilead.

timbrels and with dances] Like Miriam, Exod. xv. 20. See also 1 Sam. xviii. 6, xxi. 11, xxix. 5. The timbrel, sometimes translated tabret (Heb. *toph*), was identical with our modern tambourine or little drum.

35. *Alas, my daughter!*] It appears evident from this lamentation of Jephthah, and his daughter's reply, that the conception of Jehovah entertained by the Israelites at this time was much debased by the frequent relapses into idol worship. They had returned sincerely enough to the worship of Jehovah. But evil done is not undone in a moment. They might replace His worship, but they could not replace His image in their hearts. Hence Jephthah conceives of Him as the neighbouring nations conceived of their gods. They were accustomed to offer living sacrifices (2 Kings iii. 27, xvi. 3; Micah vi. 7). He thought it only due gratitude to do the same. Jephthah's sincerity was unquestionable, but his ignorance was great. He had rashly vowed, and he believed that Jehovah strictly exacted from him the fulfilment of his vow.

I cannot go back] "An unlawful vow is ill made, but worse performed. It were pitty this constancy should light upon any but a holy object."—Bp. Hall. But see Numb. xxx. 2; Eccl. v. 4, 5. Also ch. xxi. 18.

36. *And she said unto him, My father*] No language is sufficient to

do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.
37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my

do justice to the nobleness of this devoted woman. There are no lamentations, save for the fact that her father's house would cease out of Israel. No reproach is uttered against her father for his rashness. She is quite content to yield her life, since Israel is avenged of his enemies by her father's hands. We may compare Jephthah's daughter with Iphigenia in heathen literature and the son of Idomeneus of Crete. See Art. in Smith's *Classical Dictionary*.

do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth] These words admit of no other interpretation than that Jephthah's daughter consented to be offered up as a burnt offering. This was the universal opinion of earlier times. The historian Josephus entertains no doubt on the subject, nor would he have been likely to omit stating the fact if any such doubt had been entertained in his day. But he makes, on the contrary, some severe reflections on Jephthah's blind zeal and contempt for the institutions of his country. It was only when milder views began to be prevalent in the Middle Ages that some expressed doubts on the point. From this time forward some of the most learned Jewish Rabbis, as well as some of the greatest Christian expositors, have supposed that Jephthah's daughter simply dedicated herself to a life-long virginity. But in that case we should hardly expect the plain and unmistakeable words in *v.* 39, "he did with her according to his vow which he had vowed," but rather some such words as those of 2 Sam. vi. 23. Again, as Hitzig remarks (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, p. 129), would Jephthah have been "so deeply cast down and grieved" if only a vow of celibacy were in question? Nor is it probable that the mere dedication to a life of virginity, which must perforce have happened to many an Israelitish maiden, would have been regarded as of sufficient importance to have led to the institution of a yearly feast. Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 751, supposes that Jephthah was ignorant that a provision had been made in Levit. xxvii. 2—8 to meet the case of such unnatural vows. Ewald, as well as many other later authorities, adopts the view taken in this note. See Appendix. Note IV.

37. *let me alone two months*] If Jephthah were only devoting his daughter to a life of virginity, it is difficult to see why he should have been asked to put off for two months the fulfilment of his vow.

bewail my virginity] To be childless was a reproach among the Israelites. See 1 Sam. i., ii.; St Luke i. 25. And among other nations also. So Antigone bewails her virginity:

> ἀλεκτρον, ἀνυμέναιον, οὔτε του γάμου
> μέρος λαχοῦσαν, οὔτε παιδείου τροφῆς.
>
> Soph. *Ant.* 892, 3.

fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away *for* two 38
months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed
her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at 39
the end of two months, that she returned unto her father,
who did with her *according to* his vow which he had vowed:
and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, *that* 40
the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter
of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

CH. XII. 1—7. *Jephthah's strife with the Ephraimites. His death.*

And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, **12**

Compare Tennyson:

> No fair Hebrew boy
> Shall smile away my maiden blame among
> The Hebrew mothers.
>
> *Dream of Fair Women.*

For a house to be blotted out of Israel was a judgment from God (Ps. cix. 13). Hence Jephthah's daughter pathetically bewails the hard fate that has befallen, not herself, but her father's house, which came to an end with her. "As vestal virgin," Hitzig reminds us, "she had a whole life wherein to weep."

fellows] Or, *companions.*

39. *and she knew no man*] Or, and she *had known* no man. The tense is the perfect in the Hebrew which (see note on ch. i. 8, 10) often stands for the pluperfect. If this be the true rendering here, and the view taken in the preceding notes be correct, it is equivalent to "she died unmarried," or "without issue." If we take the rendering in our version, it implies that the dedication to perpetual virginity was the fulfilment of Jephthah's vow.

a custom] The original is stronger, an **ordinance.** The word is frequently rendered into English by *statute,* which, however, would be too strong here.

40. *to lament*] Rather, to **praise,** or **celebrate.** See ch. v. 11.

CH. XII. **1—7.** JEPHTHAH'S STRIFE WITH THE EPHRAIMITES. HIS DEATH.

1. *And the men of Ephraim*] See note on ch. viii. 1. Perhaps Jephthah the Gileadite, living as he did beyond Jordan, was less impressed with a sense of Ephraim's greatness than their neighbour Gideon the son of Joash. Ewald is very severe on those who "cross the Jordan in mere arrogance and lust of plunder, when the victory is won, to take vengeance, in his own country and in his own home, on the hero who dared conquer without them."

gathered themselves] The original is stronger, and denotes deliberate

and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine
2 house upon thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out
3 of their hands. And when I saw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to
4 fight against me? Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among

action on the part of Ephraim as a tribe. **Were called together.** See ch. iv. 12.

northward] Or, *to Zaphon* in the land of Gad (Josh. xiii. 27). This is the most probable rendering, for nothing is said about crossing the Jordan. Yet it is clear from *v.* 5 that the battle was fought on the east side of Jordan. The Talmud regards Zaphon as the same as Amathus, the modern Amata on the Wady Rajîb.

we will burn thine house] Impunity often begets insolence, and insolence chastisement. Had Gideon met the claims of Ephraim less humbly, their spirit might have been abated before this. But whereas they only "chode with Gideon sharply," they now proceed to threats of violence, and meet with a punishment which effectually tames their pride. We hear of no more demands on the part of Ephraim that nothing shall be done without him.

2. *at great strife*] Literally, *a man of strife was I, I and my people exceedingly.*

and when I called you] This makes the case worse for Ephraim. They had been asked to join the expedition and had neglected to do so.

3. *I put my life in my hands*] Cf. 1 Sam. xix. 5, xxviii. 21. It was a task of great danger which Jephthah had undertaken. See also ch. ix. 17.

4. *Then Jephthah gathered together*] The Midrash remarks here that had the priests done their duty, neither would Jephthah's rash vow have been fulfilled, nor this civil strife have taken place. It is worthy of remark (and it bears on the question of the authenticity of this book) how completely, in the disorganized state of Israel from foreign oppression and internal corruption, the religious system of Israel had been allowed to fall into abeyance. From the days of Phinehas (see ch. xx., xxi.) to the time of Samuel, we hear nothing of the high priest, the ark, or the tabernacle.

Ye Gileadites are *fugitives of Ephraim*] The only explanation of this

the Manassites. And the Gileadites took the passages of 5
Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *so*, that when
those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go
over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art* thou an
Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, 6
Say now Shibboleth: and he said, Sibboleth: for he could
not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and
slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that
time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. And 7
Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the
Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

speech that appears intelligible is that it is applied to Jephthah's army, in which some individual Ephraimites may have been present. This may have provoked the sneer, "your Gileadite army consisted of runaway Ephraimites and Manassites." Jephthah seems to have dwelt in that part of Gilead which belonged to Gad. That his army was largely recruited from Manasseh we know (ch. xi. 29), and the union between the two branches of the tribe of Joseph was closer than between any other of the tribes. Or the allusion may be to the fact that half the tribe of Manasseh had separated from their brethren by settling beyond Jordan, thus fulfilling the apprehension expressed in Josh. xxii. 24. Perhaps the "wood of Ephraim" in 2 Sam. xviii. 6, which was evidently on the other side of Jordan, may bear witness to a settlement of Ephraimites in Gilead. However this may be, the Gileadites who dwelt in Gad resented the insult, and in the event severely punished it. Most of the ancient versions avoid the difficulty by a paraphrase.

5. *passages*] Rather, **fords.**

6. *Shibboleth*] A stream, see Ps. lxix. 3, 16; Is. xxvii. 12. The dialectic variations between various parts of Judæa would naturally be as great as those between various parts of England. Even in the present day, with the immensely improved means of intercommunication, and the advance of education, it is usually possible to tell by their accent whether a person comes from the north, south, or west of England. And if it be objected that Palestine was much smaller than England, it may be answered that it was about the size of Wales, and that there is a marked distinction between the dialects of North and South Wales.

he could not frame to pronounce it *right*] Literally, *he did not appoint to speak thus*, that is, it was not the custom of his district to pronounce in that way.

forty and two thousand] A terrible slaughter for so absurd a cause of quarrel. But when the flood-gates of strife are opened, no one knows what may be the results. See Prov. xvii. 14.

7. *six years*] A very short period. Very likely his life was shortened by grief for his rash vow.

8—15. *Jephthah's successors.*

8 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. And
9 he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his
10 sons. And he judged Israel seven years. Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.
11 And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he
12 judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.
13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite,

8—15. JEPHTHAH'S SUCCESSORS.

8. *Ibzan of Beth-lehem*] The commentators are agreed that this was Bethlehem of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15). But there is no proof of this, save that Bethlehem of Judah is usually spoken of as Bethlehem-judah, and the fact noted by Ewald (*Hist. Israel.* sec. 3, B) that only one of the judges, Othniel, was from the tribe of Judah. As we hear nothing of the warlike achievements of these judges, we may presume that Jephthah's victory had freed northern and eastern Israel for a time from foreign invasion, and that his successors simply undertook the internal civil administration of the commonwealth, or of that portion of it over which they presided.

9. *And he had thirty sons*] The foreign connexions mentioned in this verse lead to the conclusion that Ibzan's position was one of more importance than that suggested in the margin of our version. The shortness of the period during which he held the judgeship leads to the conclusion that his age and experience, rather than his military spirit, caused the management of internal affairs to be entrusted to him by general consent.

11. *Elon*] He seems to have held a similar position to Ibzan.

12. *Aijalon*] Not to be confounded with Ajalon or Aijalon in the tribe of Dan (Josh. x. 12, xix. 42, xxi. 24). It perhaps should be printed Elon, for the letters are the same as those which compose Elon's name. So the LXX., Αἰλών. The name, which signifies 'lair of the deer,' was likely to be a common one.

13. *Abdon*] The Bedan, most probably, of 1 Sam. xii. 11. The vowels, it is to be remembered, were no part of the original Hebrew text. The Ain has probably dropped out of the text at a very early period, as the LXX., not understanding Bedan, has written Barak, in which it has been followed by the Syriac. Ewald thinks, however, that Bedan is Ben-dan, i.e. Samson.

a Pirathonite] Rather, the Pirathonite, as in *v.* 15. Pirathon, we learn from *v.* 15, was in the land of Ephraim. For the mount of the Amalekites, see note on ch. v. 14. It was the birthplace of the valiant Benaiah (2 Sam. xxiii. 20, 30; 1 Chron. xi. 31). It is mentioned by Josephus as Pharathon, and is the modern Ferata or Feron, south-west of Shechem.

judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, 14
that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged
Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pira- 15
thonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of
Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

CH. XIII. 1—25. *Birth of Samson foretold by an angel.*

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of 13
the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand
of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man 2
of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was*

14. *nephews*] Rather, **son's sons.** For the riding on asses see note on ch. v. 10,

CH. XIII. **1—25.** BIRTH OF SAMSON FORETOLD BY AN ANGEL.

The history of Samson, which now commences, is of a very different character to what has gone before. We may observe (1) that Samson's deeds in Israel's behalf were not preceded by any period of national repentance, (2) that he cannot be said to have in any sense delivered Israel, (3) that Samson's character was unsatisfactory and his conduct reprehensible, and (4) that so far from achieving a final triumph over the Philistines, he becomes their victim through his own folly, and at best does but bring on his adversaries the same fate that befalls himself. Yet he was a man of notable courage and strength, and, in these respects at least, a national hero. And it is possible that the ultimate supremacy of Judah was the cause that his deeds of prowess, performed on the borders of that tribe, found a permanent place in the national history.

1. *did evil again*] Literally, *added to commit.* It does not necessarily follow that the events here recorded occurred *after* those related in the last chapter. Many authorities suppose them to have occurred simultaneously, and others have supposed Samson's exploits to have taken place contemporaneously with the events recorded in 1 Sam. i—vi. Both these suppositions may be true. The remark let fall in ch. x. 7 leads to the inference that the writer, though he deals first with Jephthah's deliverance in the north-east and its consequence, and next with Samson's exploits in the south-west, does not necessarily do so in order of time. See Introduction, Ch. V.

forty years] Reckoning from the first invasion of the children of Ammon to the death of Abdon, we have a period of forty-nine years. But Samson judged Israel for twenty years (ch. xv. 20). Thus Samson's exploits may have fallen in with the judgeship of Elon in northern and of Abdon in central Palestine, and may even have commenced during the life of Jephthah.

2. *Zorah*] A city on the borders of Dan and Judah. Cf. Josh. xv. 33 and xix. 41. Now Surah; "on the edge of the hill country, 1500 feet above the sea." Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 46.

3 Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not. And the
angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto
her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but
4 thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore be-
ware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong
5 drink, and eat not any unclean *thing:* for lo, thou *shalt*
conceive, and bear a son; and no rasor shall come on his
head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the
womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand
6 of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her
husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his
countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God,
very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither
7 told he me his name: but he said unto me, Behold, thou
shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor
strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing:* for the child shall
be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

family] It stands here for tribe. See ch. xviii. 1, 30. Keil suggests that the tribe of Dan formed but one family (Numb. xxvi. 42, 43).

3. *the angel*] Or, *an angel.*

4. *wine nor strong drink*] The Hebrew *Yain*, the Greek *οἶνος*, our *wine*, are the same word. It is connected with a root signifying to *ferment*, from whence also comes *yawen*, mud. The *shecar*, or strong drink, seems to have been distilled from corn, honey, or dates. From it is derived the verb *shacar*, to be drunk. See also ch. ix. 13, note.

unclean] The unclean thing here would hardly have been the food forbidden to Israelites in general, but the special things forbidden to Nazarites, Numb. vi. 3, 4. So below, *v.* 14.

5. *Nazarite*] Heb. Nazir. The primary idea of the word is that of separation (see Numb. vi. 1—21). The nature of the Nazarite vow is explained in the passage just cited. It communicated a kind of priestly character to the person who took it. Cf. Exod. xxix. 2. See also 1 Sam. i. 11; Amos ii. 11, 12. A whole book of the Mishna, called Nazir, is devoted to the subject of this vow. See *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. *Nazarite.*

begin to deliver] Some have seen in the unusual expresssion "begin" the hand of a different author. But in truth it is but the expression of a fact different to any that have been before related. Samson, unlike the other judges, did *not* deliver Israel. But he *did* "begin" to deliver Israel, i.e. he gave the first shock to the Philistine power by the terrible destruction of their chief men related in ch. xvi.

6. *A man of God*] The usual expression (Deut. xxxiii. 1) for one who was employed to reveal God's will. Manoah's wife suspected, but did not know for certain, the character of her visitor. See *v.* 10.

7. *to the day of his death*] This particular is not mentioned in the

Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, 8
let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto
us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be
born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and 9
the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in
the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. And 10
the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband,
and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me,
that came unto me the *other* day. And Manoah arose, and 11
went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto
him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And
he said, I *am*. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come 12
to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall
we do unto him? And the angel of the LORD said unto 13
Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.
She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, 14
neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any
unclean *thing:* all that I commanded her let her observe.
And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, 15
let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for
thee. And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, 16
Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if
thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the
LORD. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the
LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD,
What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass

report of the angel's speech, *v.* 5. But it was doubtless said by him, and it was not thought necessary to repeat it twice.

10. *shewed her husband*] Lit., *told* her husband. See Acts xii. 17.

12. *Now let thy words*] Or, *at the time when thy words*. So LXX. and Vulgate.

How shall we order the child] Literally, *what shall be the judgment of the child*. From the idea of judgment comes that of custom and order. The equivalent in modern English would be, How shall we manage the child?

and how *shall we do unto him?*] Literally, *and his work*.

13. *beware*] Literally, *be kept*. It is the passive of the verb rendered *observe* in the next verse.

16. *Though*] Literally, *if*.

if thou wilt offer] These words were spoken to prepare the mind of Manoah for the discovery he was about to make, that his interlocutor was a supernatural being.

18 we may do thee honour? And the angel of the LORD said
unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is*
19 secret? So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and
offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did
20 wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it
came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from
off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the
flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*,
21 and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of
the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife.
Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.
22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because
23 we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the
LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a
burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither
would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would as *at*
this time have told us *such things* as these.
24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson:
25 and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the
spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp
of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

18. *Why askest thou thus after my name*] Cf. Gen. xxxii. 29.
secret] Rather, **wonderful**, as in Is. ix. 6. Cf. also Exod. xv. 11.

19. *meat offering*] See note on ch. vi. 18. So also below, *v.* 23.
did wondrously] Literally, *was making wonderful to do*. The word here translated *wondrously* is the same as that translated *secret* above.
looked on] Literally *were seeing*, i.e. were spectators of all that occurred. So also in the next verse.

20. *altar*] That is, the rock that served Manoah as a temporary altar.
fell on their faces] Both from fear and as an act of worship. See Lev. ix. 24; Numb. xiv. 5; Josh. v. 14, &c.

23. See note on ch. vi. 23.

24. *Samson*] Heb. *Shimshon*. The LXX. has *Sampson*. Some derive his name from Shemesh, the sun, but others suppose it to mean the strong, or the *waster*, from *shamam* to lay waste.

25. *the spirit of the Lord*] See ch. iii. 10.
move him] Literally, *smite* him. Samson (see note on ch. xiv. 6) seems to have been subject to sudden impulses to exert his strength. *All* interior impulses are in the Bible ascribed to the agency of a good or evil spirit (see notes on ch. iii. 10, ix. 23). Men in later times, who have learned by observation that these impulses are governed by certain general laws, have been inclined to lose sight of the primary in the secondary causes.

CH. XIV. 1—11. *Samson's marriage.*

14 And Samson went down *to* Timnath, and saw a woman in
2 Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came
up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen
a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines:
now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and
3 his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among
the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that
thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?
And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she
4 pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not
that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against
the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion

camp of Dan] Or, *Mahaneh-dan*, as the name of a place. See ch. xviii. 12.

Eshtaol] On the borders of Dan and Judah. Cf. Josh. xv. 33, xix. 41. Now *Yeshua*, as is supposed, situated on a hill two miles east of Zorah. For Zorah see *v.* 3.

CH. XIV. 1—11. SAMSON'S MARRIAGE.

1. *Timnath*] Now Tibnah, 740 feet above the sea. See note on Zorah, ch. xiii. 2, and observe the correctness of the words "went down." Timnah, or Timnath, was west of Bethshemesh, and is the Timnah of Josh. xv. 10. Canon Tristram (*Bible Places*, p. 47) describes vineyards (*v.* 5) and olives as lining the sides of the hill, and corn as waving in the valley, like the description in ch. xv. 5. Cf. also ch. xv. 6, where the Philistines are described as *coming up* from the lowlands. No one can doubt that this history was written by one well acquainted with the locality.

saw a woman] In the free Eastern life of those ages women were neither veiled nor shut up in harems, but the negotiations for the marriage were clearly carried on by the parents, as in most Continental countries now, as well as among the Hindoos. See Gen. xxi. 21, xxiv. 4, 38, xxxiv. 8; Exod. xxi. 9; 1 Cor. vii. 38.

2. *get her*] Rather, **take** her. See last note.

3. *among the daughters of thy brethren*] See the prohibition in Exod. xxxiv. 16 and Deut. vii. 3, which extended to the Philistines. Cf. also Gen. xxiv. 3, 4, xxvi. 34, 35.

pleaseth me well] Literally, as margin, *is right in mine eyes.*

4. *of the Lord*] See note on ch. iii. 15. Also Josh. xi. 20.

occasion] Literally, *a thing brought to pass.* The word only occurs here.

for at that time] This fixes the date of the composition of the book at a time when the Philistines had entirely ceased to rule in Israel, i. e. in the middle of David's reign at the earliest.

5 over Israel. Then went Samson down, and his father and
his mother, *to* Timnath, and came to the vineyards of
Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him.
6 And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he
rent him as *he* would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in
his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he
7 had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman;
and she pleased Samson well.
8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned
aside to see the carcase of the lion: and behold, *there was* a
9 swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And
he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came

5. *a young lion roared against him*] Literally, *a full-grown cub of the lions was roaring to meet him*, i. e. as he met him. The word here translated *full-grown cub* means properly a young lion nearly or quite full-grown. The word translated "lions" is the feminine form, but it appears to mean lion rather than lioness. See 1 Kings x. 19; 2 Chron. ix. 18, 19.

6. *came mightily*] *irruit*, Vulgate. Literally, *brake through*. The analogy of 1 Sam. x. 6 and xi. 6 seems to imply a sudden possession.

and he had *nothing in his hand*] Perhaps because under the Philistine dominion, the Israelites were not allowed to carry arms. See 1 Sam. xiii. 19—22.

but he told not] We are told above that they were with him. But it was possible in a thousand ways that though in the main they travelled together, they might not have been together when this incident happened.

7. *she pleased Samson well*] Literally, as above, *v.* 3.

8. *carcase*] Literally, *that which is fallen*, like πτῶμα in Greek.

a swarm of bees] In that hot climate a carcase is speedily dried up by the sun's heat, and putrefaction is thus arrested. "If one were to understand this of a putrid and offensive carcass, the narrative would lose all probability, for it is well known that bees will neither approach the dead body of man nor animal. But in the desert of Arabia the heat of the summer season often so dries up the moisture of the bodies of dead men and camels within twenty-four hours, that they remain a long time like mummies, unaltered and without offensive smell." Rosenmüller, *Alterthumskunde*, IV. 2, 424. Compare the story of the swarm of bees in the head of the slain Onesilaus. Herod. v. 114.

carcase] The word here is not the same as that in the former part of the verse. Here it signifies simply *body*.

9. *took thereof*] The Hebrew word here is not the usual one for *took*. Some translate *and he broke it off*, others, *and he drew it out* (*took* it out, LXX.). The same word is translated *taken out* below. "The Rabbis write here that the word is properly to pull asunder that

to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. So his father went down unto 10 the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw 11 him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12—20. *The riddle and its consequences.*

And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle 12 unto you: if you can certainly declare it me *within* the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: but if ye can- 13 not declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and

which clings to anything, as bread in the oven, and honey in the combs, and by so pulling asunder to take and receive." Buxtorf, s. v.

and went on eating] Rather, **and went on, eating as he went.**

10. *for so used the young men to do*] Apparently the explanation refers to the Philistine custom, for had it been a Jewish one there would have been no need for the explanation. Besides it would not appear to have been a custom among the Israelites and their kindred either before or after this time. See Gen. xxix. 22, and Tobit viii. 19. In John ii. 10, however, it would seem that the bridegroom gave the feast.

11. *when they saw him*] The LXX. renders *when they feared him*, which is a possible alternative rendering. But the A. V. is preferable, for at present they had had no reason to fear him. Josephus seems to have had the same reading as the LXX., for he says that they "watched him."

thirty companions] Probably to be the "children of the bride-chamber" (Matt. ix. 15) as Samson had brought no friends of his own.

12—20. THE RIDDLE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

12. *I will now put forth a riddle*] Literally, *I will now riddle to you a riddle.* The Hebrew word for riddle is derived from a word signifying to *tie up in knots*, hence to *be intricate.* See 1 Kings x. 1 (in the original). Also Ezek. xvii. 2. Riddles were held in high estimation in early ages. Clearchus wrote a book on them, and Plutarch, *Septem Sapientum convivium*, tells how Amasis of Egypt and an Ethiopian monarch staked many cities on the guessing of a riddle. See also Becker, *Charicles*, Scene 6, Excursus 3.

seven days of the feast] Cf. Gen. xxix. 27.

sheets] Heb. *sedinim*, to which the Greek σινδών appears to be related. It was a wide flowing under garment of linen worn next the body. See Is. iii. 23 where it is translated *fine linen.*

change of garments] These were frequently of a costly description. See Gen. xlv. 22; 2 Kings v. 22, 23.

thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put
14 forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto
them,

Out of the eater came forth meat,
And out of the strong came forth sweetness.

15 And they could not *in* three days expound the riddle. And
it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto
Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare
unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house
with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it* not
16 *so?* And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou
dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a
riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told
it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my
17 father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? And she
wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted:
and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her,
because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle
18 to the children of her people. And the men of the city

14. *meat*] Or, *food*. The word *meat*, in the days when the A. V. was made, had a wider meaning than it now has. Derived from the French *mettre*, to *put*, it signified any food placed upon, or sent up to, the table.

expound] Literally *tell*.

15. *take that we have*] Or, *make us poor*, as in Gen. xlv. 11; Deut. xxviii. 42 (cf. marg.). So the LXX. and Luther render. This shews that the garments spoken of above were expensive ones, though not sufficiently so as to justify this high-handed conduct on the part of the dominant race.

16. *my father nor my mother*] From this passing intimation we learn that the father and the mother, in the simple life of primitive Israel, were regarded with special reverence by their children. See Prov. i. 8, vi. 20—22.

17. *the seven days, while their feast lasted*] i.e. the *rest* of the seven days. We are not to understand that she wept before him during the *whole* of the seven days, because this mode of expression is the usual one in Hebrew where the remainder of any particular number is implied. Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 10 with the preceding portion of the narrative. On the other hand, we can hardly suppose that Samson's wife only wept before him on the seventh day. No doubt she herself resented the conduct of her newly-made husband in keeping a secret from her, and could see also the signs of coming trouble in the growing indignation of her countrymen, before it broke out in the threats recorded in *v.* 15. Vatablus thinks that her weeping commenced on the fourth day.

lay sore] Or, *urged* him, i. e. with intreaties.

said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

What *is* sweeter than honey?
And what *is* stronger than a lion?

And he said unto them,

If ye had not plowed with my heifer,
Ye had not found out my riddle.

And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went 19
down *to* Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change *of garments* unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up *to* his father's house. But Samson's wife was 20
given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

CH. XV. 1—8. *Samson's revenge.*

But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of 15
wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and

18. *the sun*] The word here is *heres*. See ch. viii. 13, note.

19. *came upon him*] See note on *v.* 6.

spoil] See 2 Sam. ii. 21 (marg.).

his anger was kindled] It appears to have been shortlived (see ch. xv. 1), but at least it was not unnatural, and was no doubt deepened by the thought that these people were the oppressors of his countrymen. The revenge he took was by no means surprising in that warlike age, on the part of a young man conscious of supernatural strength, and hating the nation with which he had nevertheless chosen to ally himself. See Introduction, Ch. III.

20. *his companion*] One of the thirty mentioned in *v.* 11. The margin of our Bible refers us to the "friend of the bridegroom" spoken of in John iii. 29. The LXX. adopts this view and renders by *νυμφαγωγός*. The excuse for this conduct on the part of the friends of Samson's wife was his abrupt departure, leaving her behind him. But this contemptuous treatment produced a yet fiercer outbreak on Samson's part, which is recorded in the next chapter.

CH. XV. **1—8.** SAMSON'S REVENGE.

1. *within a while after*] Literally, *after days*. We do not know how long the time was, but it was probably not more than a month or two.

with a kid] A present in order to make reconciliation. Samson's character seems to have been generous, though impulsive and weak. The kid was intended as a sort of admission that he had been too hasty in his displeasure, and that his wife had some ground of complaint against him. A kid is still the usual gift rather than a lamb. See Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 204.

he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her
2 father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her: therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is* not her younger sister
3 fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her. And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.
4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand
5 in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also

3. *do them*] i. e. to his wife's father and his friends.

Now shall I be] Literally, *this time*, i. e. on this occasion.

more blameless than] Or, *blameless in respect of*. So the LXX. which has ἀθῶος ἀπό. Cf. Matt. xxvii. 4, 24. Samson is ready to admit that he did not act rightly on the former occasion, in slaying unoffending persons in revenge for a trick. "This time," he says, "the Philistines will not be able to say that they have any ground of complaint against me."

though I do them a displeasure] Literally, *if*, or, *when, I am a doer of evil towards them*.

4. *foxes*] Or, *jackals*, Heb. *shu'al* which, through the Persian *schagal*, becomes our *jackal*. They are still to be found in the Holy Land, and their cry at night, echoing from Ebal to Gerizim, disturbs the traveller who takes his rest at Shechem. So Dr Petermann tells us in his *Reisen im Orient*. They are also still to be found in considerable numbers in the neighbourhood where Samson dwelt. The naturalist Scheber (quoted by Rosenmüller, *Alterthumskunde*, IV. 3, 154), gives the following among other reasons for preferring the jackal here. 1. The jackal is more easily caught than the fox. 2. The fox is shy and suspicious and flies mankind, the jackal is not. 3. Foxes are difficult, jackals comparatively easy, to treat in the way here described. So also Hengstenberg, *Geschichte des Reiches Gottes*, II. 66. See a similar story in Ovid, *Fasti*, IV. 707. It does not appear that the fox feeds on carrion, which the Shu'al does (Ps. lxiii. 11). Some, however prefer the rendering *fox*, and this animal may have been comprehended under the general term *Shu'al*.

firebrands] Hebrew *Lappidim*, here *torches*. See note on ch. v. 4, vii. 16.

5. *standing corn*] This mode of inflicting vengeance on an enemy was very usual in early times. Herodotus (I. 17—19) tells us how the Lydian King Alyattes adopted this practice for twelve successive years to revenge himself on his neighbours the Milesians.

shocks] The Hebrew word is translated *stacks* in Exod. xxii. 6. It means either (1) stacks of corn or (2) a heap of sheaves, or *shock* as here.

the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. Then the 6
Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered,
Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had
taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the
Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.
And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet 7
will I be avenged of you, and after *that* I will cease. And he 8
smote them hip and thigh *with* a great slaughter: and he
went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

Cf. Job v. 26. For *shock*, see Tusser, *Good Husbandry*, August 16,

"The mowing of barley, if barley do stand
Is cheapest and best, for to rid out of hand;
Some mow it and rake it and set it on cocks
Some mow it and bind it and set it on shocks."

vineyards and *olives*] The word *cherem* (from which Carmel is derived) signifies originally a fruitful field (see margin of Is. xxxvii. 24). Hence it came to mean *vineyard*. But there is no such meaning here. For *vineyards and olives* we must read **olive-yard**, or better, according to the analogy of the German, **olive-garden**.

6. *burnt her*] So that, after all, the fate she had tried to avoid by her treachery towards her husband, came upon her at last. Timidity and prudence are not always identical. Nor does the cowardice of the Philistines, in avenging themselves upon the helpless, rather than upon the offender, secure them from evil consequences.

7. *Though ye have done this*] Perhaps the best equivalent in idiomatic English would be, "If this is the way you act, I will most assuredly be revenged upon you." Literally, *if ye are acting thus*—; *but* I swear *that I have been avenged upon you*, the perfect denoting the matured intention of Samson's mind.

8. *hip and thigh*] Heb. *leg upon thigh*, i.e. hewed them in pieces with such violence that their bodies lay in confused heaps, their limbs piled up on one another. The Chaldee translates "horse upon foot," but this is of course a mere paraphrase.

with a great slaughter] The Hebrew is more vivid, *a great slaughter.*

Etam] Etam is mentioned in 1 Chron. iv. 32 and in 2 Chron. xi. 6. Both these places were in Judah, and they may have been identical, though from the connexion in which the names appear the latter would seem to have been situated some distance to the north of the former. If the latter Etam lay near Beth-lehem and Tekoa, it may well have been the Etam of this narrative, which was evidently (see next verse) within the borders of Judah. Recent discoverers, however, have identified the place with *Beit' Atab*, near Zorah and Eshtaol, but within the borders of Judah. It stands on the crest of a rocky knoll, with a rock tunnel of great antiquity connecting the village with its chief spring, the en-

9—13. *Samson delivered to the Philistines.*

9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and
10 spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said,
Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To
bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done
11 to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top
of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not
that the Philistines *are* rulers over us? what *is* this *that* thou
hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did
12 unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto
him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver
thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said
unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me
13 yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we
will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but
surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with
two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

trance to which can only be found by those well acquainted with the locality. See Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 48, and Conder's *Bible Handbook*.

9—13. SAMSON DELIVERED TO THE PHILISTINES.

9. *spread themselves*] Literally, *were spread* or *scattered*, no doubt in exploring parties in search of Samson.

Lehi] So called from what follows, see *v.* 17. The situation of Lehi has not been identified.

11. *top*] Rather, **cleft** (Is. ii. 21, where the same words occur, and are translated "tops of the ragged rocks"), from a root signifying *division*. Possibly the tunnel spoken of above (*v.* 8, note). We may observe the intimate acquaintance of the writer with the natural features of the country. The men of Judah must have gone *up* to the summit of the rock, they went *down* (see the margin for the correct translation of the Heb. word) to the cleft.

the Philistines are *rulers over us*] How completely the spirit of the men of Judah was broken may be discerned from their conduct here, as well as by a comparison of 1 Sam. xiii. 7, 19.

12. *that ye will not fall upon me yourselves*] Samson's generous and heroic nature will not permit him to enter into strife with his own countrymen, in spite of the selfish and cowardly spirit they were now displaying. Confident in his strength, he is willing to be bound and delivered to the Philistines, but he will not imbrue his hands with Israelite blood.

14—17. *The destruction of a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass.*

And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said,

With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
With the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

18—20. *The miracle in Lehi.*

And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave a hollow

14—17. THE DESTRUCTION OF A THOUSAND MEN WITH THE JAW-BONE OF AN ASS.

14. *shouted against him*] Literally, *to meet* him, i.e. their shouts met him as he came forward.

came mightily] As in ch. xiv. 6.

loosed] Literally, *were melted*, as margin.

15. *new*] Or, *fresh*, of an ass recently dead, and therefore less brittle.

slew a thousand men] Doubtless assisted by a panic which seized on the Philistines when they saw the preternatural strength of their antagonist. Cf. Levit. xxvi. 8; Josh. xxiii. 10.

16. *heaps upon heaps*] Literally, as margin, *one heap, two heaps.* Samson, or his historian, breaks out into poetry here. The deeds of Jewish heroes, like those of other nations, were largely celebrated in verse. The same Hebrew word stands for *ass* and *heap* in this passage. There is therefore a play upon words here.

17. *Ramath-lehi*] The **height**, or **eminence, of the jawbone**, according to some of the best ancient and modern interpreters.

18—20. THE MIRACLE IN LEHI.

18. *into the hand of thy servant*] Rather, **by**. The same Hebrew particle is translated twice *into* and once *for*, in this verse.

19. *God*] The use of Elohim here, when Samson, it is said, prayed to Jehovah, has attracted some attention among the commentators. It

place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

Ch. XVI. 1—3. *Samson's exploit at Gaza.*

16 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went in unto her. *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and

at least serves to cast some doubt upon the theory which assigns the passages in which Elohim occurs to another hand than those in which Jehovah is employed.

a hollow place that was *in the jaw*] Rather, **the hollow that is in Lehi.** The word (*Machtesh*) here translated *hollow* is translated *mortar* in Prov. xxvii. 22, and is used of a valley, apparently near Jerusalem, Zeph. i. 11. It was no doubt a mortar-like cavity in the rock, which was in existence in the time of the historian, and had been handed down by tradition as the place where the miracle happened. The LXX. translate *the hole which was in Siagon* (or *jawbone*), but apparently regard Siagon as a proper name, as they do in *v.* 14. In *v.* 9 they leave Lehi untranslated. The Vulgate translates as the A. V., thus unnecessarily adding a fresh wonder to the miracle.

En-hakkore] "The fountain of him who calls," i.e. upon God.

Ch. XVI. 1—3. Samson's Exploit at Gaza.

1. *a harlot*] Samson's sensual disposition led him into the utmost danger, and finally proved his ruin. Keil cites a striking passage from St Ambrose here, "Samson when strong and brave strangled a lion, but he could not strangle his own loves. He burst the fetters of his foes, but not the cords of his own lusts. He burned up the crops of others, and lost the fruit of his own valour when burning with the flame enkindled by a single woman." "Of all the deliverers of Israel there is none of whom there are reported so many weaknesses, or so many miracles, as of Samson." Bp. Hall.

2. *In the morning, when it is day*] Rather, **when the day dawns,** or **at morning light.**

3. *took*] Rather, **grasped**; literally, *took forcible hold of.*

went away with them] Rather, **removed** them: literally *pulled them up.*

put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that *is* before Hebron.

4—20. *Samson's infatuation for Delilah, and her treachery.*

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in 4
the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. And the 5
lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one *of us* eleven hundred *pieces* of silver. And Delilah said 6

a hill] Rather, the hill or mountain.

before Hebron] This may be explained either (1) *opposite* Hebron, which was about forty miles from Gaza, or (2) *towards* Hebron. Near Gaza there is a range of hills in the direction of Hebron, the highest of which commands a view of the hills round Hebron. Hither, as Robinson tells us (*Biblical Researches in Palestine*, II. 39), ancient tradition supposes the gates of Gaza to have been carried.

4—20. SAMSON'S INFATUATION FOR DELILAH, AND HER TREACHERY.

4. *valley of Sorek*] The word here translated *valley* is the ravine through which a winter torrent flows. See note on ch. iv. 7. Sorek has not been identified, but it was no doubt in the neighbourhood of Samson's birth-place. The place was no doubt famous for its vines. See Gen. xlix. 11 (Heb).

Delilah] Her name is derived from a root signifying that which hangs down or droops, as a palm branch. It may (1) have referred to the delicate grace of her form. Or it may (2) with some authorities be supposed to mean *weak*. The idea (3) of some of the Rabbis that she was so named because she deprived Samson of his strength seems more fanciful than probable. It is not stated whether Delilah were a Philistine or one of Samson's own countrywomen. The former is usually taken for granted, by Josephus, among others. But it is a question whether Samson, with all his weakness, would have reposed such implicit confidence in her if she had been one of his enemies. Nor, one would think, would the immense bribe mentioned in *v.* 5 have been required.

5. *lords*] See ch. iii. 3.

Entice] Cf. ch. xiv. 15.

wherein his great strength lieth] The idea of the Philistines probably was that he possessed some sorcerer's charm by which he was enabled to perform his wonderful feats of strength. These feats were the more remarkable, in that it does not appear that Samson's size was in any way proportionate to his strength. He is not described as a "son of Anak," nor is he spoken of as Goliath is spoken of in 1 Sam. xvii.

afflict] Or *humble*, as margin.

every one of us] Lit. *a man*. The bribe was a large one, and shews

to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.
7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak,
8 and be as another man. Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been
9 dried, and she bound him with them. Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it
10 toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou
11 mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I

the terror Samson had inspired. Eleven hundred pieces of silver amounted to about £135. The whole, therefore, was £675—a considerable sum in those days. But if, with some, we reckon the silver shekel at three shillings, the amount would then be £825. See Mr Madden in the *Variorum Teacher's Bible*. It may be noticed that there is a remarkable consistency in the whole narrative. First we have the tremendous slaughter of the Philistines, then the immense sum of money offered to Delilah by men well aware of Samson's sensitiveness to female blandishments, and then the plots laid for his life by men who dare not attempt to lay hands upon him, in spite of their being many and he but one.

6. *Tell me, I pray thee*] Any one less foolish than Samson would have seen at once that these words were spoken with a purpose, and would have shaken himself free from the dangerous fascinations of the temptress.

7. *green withs*] Better, as margin, **new cords.** The Hebrew translated *green* is properly, as margin, *moist*, and is here spoken of the undried flax of which the cords were made. See Gen. xxx. 37, where it is translated *green*, and Numb. vi. 3, where it is rendered *moist*. Some, however, suppose them to have been made of the sinews of animals, as distinct from the ropes or cords mentioned below, *v.* 11. The derivation gives us no help in the decision of the question.

another man] Lit. *one of the men*, i.e. one of ordinary mankind.

9. *Now* there were *men lying in wait abiding with her*] Lit. *the ambush was sitting to* (i.e. *by*) *her*. So below, *v.* 12.

toucheth] Lit. as margin, *smelleth*.

11. *ropes*] The word here signifies what has been *twined*. That in *v.* 7 signifies what *hangs down*.

that never were occupied] Lit., as margin, *wherewith work has not been done*. Cf. St Luke xix. 13, as also Exod. xxxviii. 34, Ezek. xxvii.

be weak, and be as another man. Delilah therefore took 12
new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him,
The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liers
in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from
off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said unto Samson, 13
Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me
wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her,
If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.
And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The 14
Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of
his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with
the web. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I 15
love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast
mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein
thy great strength *lieth*. And it came to pass, when she 16
pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that
his soul was vexed unto death; that he told her all his 17
heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a rasor upon
mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my
mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go

16, 27, &c. The word *occupy*, like the Latin *occupare*, signifies to *engage in business*, to *employ*, as well as to *fill a place*, as in 1 Cor. xiv. 16. Compare also the Bible and Prayer Book Version of Ps. cvii. 23. So an Act of Parliament in the reign of Henry the Eighth uses the word as equivalent to *employ*:—"an Archbishop may have cause to *occupy* more chaplains than six." And we use the word in this sense in the passive, as in the phrase to *be occupied* in business.

12. *thread*] Not the same word as in *v.* 9. There the word used signifies a slender twisted cord. Here the word means *sewing* thread.

13. *locks*] The word signifies what is interwoven. Here, therefore, it means *plaits*.

web] It means the woven cloth, with which she interwove his hair as he slept. Cf. a similar word in Is. xxv. 7, xxviii. 20, where our version has *covering*.

14. *And she fastened it with the pin*] Lit. *and she struck with the peg*. The word translated *peg* is the same as in ch. iv. 21, 22. What is meant is that she fastened her piece of weaving securely in the loom, so as to prevent its slipping out, weaving Samson's hair in her work just as she would ordinary threads.

the pin of the beam] Rather, the **peg** or **pin** of **the weft**, i.e. of what had been woven. This peg or pin Samson took with him, and the cloth into which his hair had been woven also.

16. *vexed*] Lit., as margin, *shortened*. See ch. x. 16.

17. *if I be shaven*] Samson's Nazarite vow was to last his whole

from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other*
18 man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up *this* once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her,
19 and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused *him* to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.
20 And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times *before*, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

21—31. *Revenge and Death of Samson.*

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and

life, and upon its faithful observance his strength depended. "The superhuman strength of Samson did not reside in his hair *as* hair, but in the fact that Jehovah was with him." Keil.

any other *man*] Heb. *all mankind.*

18. *this once*] See ch. vi. 39, where the Hebrew is the same.

me] This is an emendation of the Masorites. The Hebrew text makes this a remark of the historian, and reads **her**. But the LXX. and Chaldee agree with the Masorites here.

money] Rather, **the** money, i. e. which had been promised, *v.* 5. The Philistines faithfully fulfilled their engagement, but what became of Delilah and her ill-gotten gains we are not told. She vanishes from the history so soon as her part in the infamous compact was performed.

19. *she made him sleep upon her knees*] A very striking practical commentary upon Prov. vii. 22, 23.

a man] Heb. **the** man, i. e. the lier in wait who had been placed at Delilah's service.

to shave off] The commentators here refer to the story of Nisus and the purple lock which his daughter shaved off (Ovid, *Metam.* 8, 6). But the story, as well as its moral, is very different to this.

she began to afflict him] According to the usual custom of Hebrew historians, who invariably emphasize by repetition, what follows is here referred to.

20. *other times*] Lit. *time after time.*

shake myself] i. e. free from my bonds.

the Lord] See note on *v.* 17.

21—31. REVENGE AND DEATH OF SAMSON.

21. *took him*] Heb. *laid hold of him.*

put out] Heb. as margin, *bored* out.

his eyes] The Mishna (*De Uxore Adulterii Suspecta*, ch. 8) has the

brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the 22
hair of his head began to grow *again* after he was shaven.

Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together 23
for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they 24
praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their 25
hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him

following note on this passage. Commenting on the maxim "with what measure a man metes, with that it shall be measured to him," it proceeds, "Samson followed after the delights of the eyes, therefore the Philistines bored them out. Absalom was proud of his hair, therefore by his hair he was hanged."

fetters of brass] Heb. *two* fetters of brass, probably one for the hands and the other for the feet. Cf. 2 Kings xxv. 7.

did grind] Heb. *was grinding*, i.e. that was his usual employment. It was the employment of slaves of the lowest class (Exod. xi. 5 and xii. 29), and to Greek and Roman slaves it was a punishment. See Hom. *Od.* VII. 103, 4, XX. 105—110; Terence, *Phorm.* II. 1, 18; *Andr.* I. 2, 27, 28. "He was more blinde when hee saw licentiously, then now, that he sees not; He was a greater slave when he served his affections, then now, in grinding for the Philistines." Bp Hall.

22. *after*] Better, as margin, **as when.** When Samson's hair returned to the condition befitting a Nazarite, his strength returned.

23. *Dagon*] "His form was a fish, as the name *Dag* signifies, but with human hands and feet and body" (cf. 1 Sam. v. 4). Movers, *Phönizier*, I. 591. He is called Derketo by profane writers. His worship, according to the same authority, is connected with the sea as prolific with life. Some, however, would derive from Dagan, corn, and interpret by *Zeus Arotrios*. The Assyrian Bel had also the name of Dagan, and this has been supposed (see Art. in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*) to point to a possible identity between Dagon and Bel. But Canon Rawlinson (*Ancient Monarchies*, II. 14) denies that there is anything in common between the two. Dagon had a temple at Ashdod as well as Gaza. See 1 Sam. v. 1, 2; 1 Chron. x. 10; 1 Macc. xi. 4.

25. *made them sport*] Rather, as margin, **made sport before them.** The word is translated *play* in 1 Sam. xviii. 7; 2 Sam. vi. 5, 21. It means generally to make merry. It is used of a sham fight (2 Sam. ii. 14), which however became a real one before it was over. It is no slight indication of the date of the book of Judges that while here the older

26 between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that
held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars
whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.
27 Now the house was full *of* men and women; and all the
lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the
roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld
28 while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the
LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee,
and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that

and harsher form of the word is found, the later and softer form known to the later Hebrew occurs in the former part of the verse, thus marking a period of transition in the language.

26. *Suffer*] Lit. *cause me to rest*, i.e. do not hinder me. Perhaps the meaning of St Luke xxii. 51 in the A. V. may derive some light from this passage.

standeth] Lit. *is supported.*

> "The building was a spacious Theatre,
> Half round on two main pillars vaulted high.
> * * *
> The other side was open, where the throng
> On banks and scaffolds under skie might stand."
> *Samson Agonistes*, 1605—10.

lean upon them] For rest after his exertions. Had he been "making sport" when he laid hold of the pillars upon which the house rested, he could hardly have been visible to the people on the roof.

27. *the house was full*] Not only was there a goodly company on the roof, but underneath it. The persons of highest rank were apparently under cover. Three thousand persons of lesser quality occupied the roof, while the people of the lowest grade were in the court-yard.

28. *unto the Lord*] Rather, unto **Jehovah.**

O Lord God] Rather, **O Lord Jehovah.** Jehovah is usually rendered *Lord* in the A.V., which thus leaves no other word by which to render the title *Adonai*, which here precedes Jehovah, and has the literal meaning of *Lord*. *Elohim* is the word usually rendered *God* by our translators.

O God] Here Samson says *Elohim*, thus using *three* different titles of God, as was frequently the case in moments of great solemnity. Compare *El Elohim Jehovah* in Josh. xxii. 22 and Ps. l. 1, where special emphasis is laid upon the Name of God. There is something deeply pathetic in this passage. Samson has no desire to live. Sorrow and suffering have deepened his character and weaned him from those sensual delights which have been his ruin. In his affliction his soul returns to God, whom he now addresses in language of the deepest reverence. That he had not been left altogether uninstructed in the law we learn from this threefold recognition of God as Lord or Ruler, as the Eternal self-existent One Who had revealed Himself to Moses, and as

I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars 29
upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. 30
And he bowed *himself* with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were

the Mighty One before Whom the earlier Hebrews had bowed down. But he had not learned the deeper lesson. "Vengeance is Mine. I will repay, saith the Lord." The whole picture now given of Samson is admirably consistent with what we elsewhere learn of the man and his age.

that I may be at once avenged] Lit. *and I will be avenged* with *one vengeance*. The use of the cohortative form of the future here seems to suggest a more forcible rendering than *that I may be avenged*. Render, **and let** me be avenged.

29. *took hold*] The word is an unusual one which occurs here for the first time. See Ruth iii. 8 (margin) and Job vi. 18. Samson *bent* or *clasped* his hands or arms round the pillars.

middle pillars] Samson was no doubt now at the entrance of the inner hall, with two pillars in front on which the building rested, and near enough together to enable a man of no very extraordinary stature to grasp them. The higher classes, as has been said, had gathered either under or upon the roof. In front of the building was a court-yard—see note on *v.* 26, 27—in the midst of which Samson made sport. And while their victim was allowed some respite, the spectators remained on the roof, so that he was enabled to involve them in the general destruction.

and on which it was borne up] Rather, as margin, **and he leaned upon them**, or *was* **supported on them**. See 2 Kings xviii. 21.

30. *Let me die*] Lit. *let my soul die*, or *my life*, the Hebrew word *nephesh*, like the Greek ψυχή, being the usual expression for the principle of life which man has in common with the lower animals, though in his case, allied to a higher intelligence and superior faculties to theirs.

he bowed himself *with* all his *might*] Lit. *he bent with* (or *in*) *strength*.

and the house fell]

> "This uttered, straining all his nerves he bowed
> As with the force of winds and waters pent,
> When Mountains tremble, those two massive Pillars
> With horrible convulsion to and fro,
> He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew
> The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
> Upon the heads of all who sate beneath,
> Lords, Ladies, Captains, Councellors, or priests,
> Their choice nobility and flower."
>
> MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*, 1646—54.

31 moe than *they* which he slew in his life. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

CH. XVII. 1—6. *Micah's theft and image worship.*

17 And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name
2 *was* Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about

moe] The ancient form of *more*. Compare the Christmas Carol, "All for to be taxed with many one moe." "Faith and troth they would no mo." Greene, *Shepherd's Ode*.

31. *Then his brethren...came down*] Not his brethren in the strict sense, for he was an only child, but in the more general sense in which Lot is called the brother of Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14.

the house of his father] Not the household of Manoah, but the whole tribal family to which Samson belonged. See note on ch. vi. 15. A large body of men would be required, even after this great disaster, to rescue the body of Samson from his enraged enemies. And in the down-trodden state of Israel at this time (see note on ch. xv. 11) it could only have been in a period of the greatest distress and confusion among the Philistines that Samson's body could have been recovered at all. Thus the various portions of the narrative mutually confirm each other.

in the buryingplace] Manoah therefore was most probably dead, though Milton by a poetic fiction represents him as alive. See note on ch. viii. 32.

he judged Israel] The term (see note on ch. ii. 16) simply implies a position of importance in Israel, and not of necessity what we now understand by judicial functions.

CH. XVII. **1—6.** MICAH'S THEFT AND IMAGE WORSHIP.

1. *And there was a man*] The date of the events which follow is fixed by ch. xx. 28 to have been much earlier than most which precedes it. For their proper position in the history and their having been added here, see Introduction, Ch. I.

Micah] Heb. *Micayahu* (who is like Jehovah?), as Isaiah is *Yeshayahu* and Jeremiah *Yirmyahu*. The vowel termination is occasionally omitted, as in *v.* 5, and throughout the rest of the narrative. The name of the prophet Micah always appears in the latter form. The episode of Micah is introduced as leading to an account of the settlement of the tribe of Dan in Northern Palestine, and apparently, from the allusion to there being no king in Israel (*v.* 6, cf. ch. xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25) with a view of illustrating the lawlessness of the times. This fixes the date of the book as subsequent to David's accession, when first the blessing of a settled government was known. See Introduction, Ch. I.

2. *from thee*] The Hebrew and the Alexandrian codex of the LXX. have *to* thee. The construction is probably elliptical, "which belonged

which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be thou* of the LORD, my son. And when he 3
had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. Yet he restored the money unto his mother; 4
and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an 5

to thee and were taken," or as we should say, "that money of yours which was taken." Ewald explains, "which was entrusted to thee" (by my father), and translates "I took" by "I will take." This however is extremely arbitrary.

Blessed be thou of the Lord] Not, of course, because of the theft, but because of its acknowledgement. The Vulgate and LXX. translate more literally, **Blessed be my son of the Lord**. So Luther also renders.

3. *eleven hundred* shekels *of silver*] See note on ch. xvi. 5, where the word supplied is *pieces* instead of *shekels*.

dedicated] Lit. *sanctified*. So the LXX. The Vulgate has "consecravi et vovi."

unto the Lord] Hebrew, **unto Jehovah**. So soon had the precepts of the Law (Exod. xx. 4; Lev. xxvi. 1; Deut. iv. 16, xxvii. 15) faded from the minds of the people of Israel. Micah's mother could devote £135 (or £165, see note on ch. xvi. 5) to the worship of Jehovah. She had not turned aside to other gods. Yet she had forgotten that no image or similitude was seen when God revealed Himself on Sinai, but only a voice was heard. See Deut. iv. 12.

a graven image and a molten image] Cf. Deut. xxvii. 15. The *Pesel* was a carved image, whether of stone or wood (see Is. xliv. 15) or any other material (Is. xxx. 22). The *Massechah* (derived from *nasach*, to pour out) was of molten metal. The word is used of Aaron's calf in Exod. xxxii.

4. *Yet*] Heb. *and*, which often in that language has the force of *but*. No such sense, however, is needed here. It is only an instance of the repetition so common in Hebrew. See ch. xx. 35, note.

two hundred shekels] Micah's mother had not spoken the exact truth. When it came to the point she did not give one-fifth of what she had promised.

5. *a house of gods*] Rather, **a house of God**. So LXX. and Vulgate. The Chaldee has *a house of error*. The name of God, Elohim, is a plural form, and may be translated God, or gods, as in ch. ii. 12, v. 8. See Appendix, Note 1. The worship at Micah's temple was, as we have seen, a worship of Jehovah. See also *v.* 12.

ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who
6 became his priest. In those days *there was* no king in
Israel, *but* every man did *that* which *was* right in his own
eyes.

7—13. *The Levite appointed Micah's priest.*

7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of
the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned

an ephod] See ch. viii. 27.

teraphim] Cf. Gen. xxxi. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 23 (where the A.V. has *idolatry*), xix. 13, 16; 2 Kings xxiii. 24; Hos. iii. 4. Sometimes, as in 1 Sam. xix., they appear to have been of large size, and to have been representations of the human form. They were the Penates of the people of the East, from whom the Hebrews adopted them in spite of prohibitions. The name has been derived from a Semitic root signifying prosperity. In this image, ephod and teraphim, Hengstenberg sees a kind of caricature of the Divine worship, the image standing for the ark of the covenant, the ephod for the sacerdotal robes, the teraphim for the names of the 12 tribes which were engraven on 12 precious stones, and placed (Exod. xxviii. 9—12) upon the shoulders of the High Priest when he entered the sanctuary. The Levite, when he was fortunate enough to meet with him, was, to Micah's superstitious mind, a satisfactory substitute for the High Priest himself.

consecrated] Heb. *filled the hand*. See Exod. xxviii. 41, xxix. 9, &c.; Levit. vii. 37, viii. 33, xvi. 32; Numb. iii. 3. It means to fill the hand with sacrificial gifts, intended to be offered to Jehovah. The portions of the priest, together with the bread and cakes, were put into the hand of the priest. See Exod. xxix. 24; Levit. viii. 27. Also Bähr, *Symbolik*, II. 426.

became his priest] Jonathan here renders by Chomara, i.e. a heathen, as distinguished from an Israelite, priest. The latter term (Cohen) signifies, according to many, a man of honourable position, and it is frequently translated *prince*. The Chomara was literally a person *shut up*, as in the monastic life, or *set apart*.

7—13. The Levite appointed Micah's priest.

7. *family*] See Josh. vii. 17, where the same expression occurs. In the latter passage the LXX. and Vulgate read the plural. Here, however, they both have the singular, with the exception of the Vatican MS. of the LXX., which leaves the words out altogether. The Peshito also omits them. The passage in Joshua admits of the explanation that the reading is corrupt. Here, however, it clearly means that portion of the tribe of Levi which was resident in Judah. See Josh. xxi. 9—19.

who] Lit. *and he*, as below.

a Levite] Who this Levite was we learn from ch. xviii. 30, where see note. According to Josh. xxi. the descendants of Aaron only were

there. And the man departed out of the city from Beth- 8
lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find *a place:* and he
came *to* mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he
journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest 9
thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Beth-
lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find *a place.*
And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me 10
a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver
by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the
Levite went *in.* And the Levite was content to dwell with 11
the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his
sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young 12
man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.
Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me 13
good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

CH. XVIII. 1—10. *The exploring expedition from Dan.*

In those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those **18**

settled in the tribe of Judah. But in the matter of settlement it is possible that the children of Moses may have been reckoned with the descendants of Aaron. It has been suggested by some that the grandson of the great prophet was discontented with his obscure position in the priestly ranks.

8. *as he journeyed*] Lit. *to make his way.*

10. *father*] A term of respect. See Gen. xlv. 8; 2 Kings vi. 21, xiii. 14. So the Jews, and later still the Christians, in the East and West alike were accustomed to style their teachers. The title *Papa* or *Pope* (originally *father*) in the West confined to the head of the Roman Catholic Church is in the East applied to every parish priest.

by the year] Lit. *for days*, days frequently standing for a full year. See margin of Gen. xxiv. 55 and 1 Sam. ii. 19, xxvii. 7. Also ch. xi. 40.

victuals] From the Latin *victus*, literally, that by which we live. This is the precise equivalent of the Hebrew here. Compare our similar expression a *living*.

12. a *Levite*] Heb. *the* Levite, i.e. a person of that rank of life. The indefinite article gives precisely the same impression in English. Micah's superstitious confidence was destined to be rudely shaken. If we are going to do wrong, priestly sanction will only make matters worse instead of better. That it was forbidden to set up images is shewn in the note on *v.* 3.

CH. XVIII. 1—10. THE EXPLORING EXPEDITION FROM DAN.

1. *in those days*] By a comparison with Josh. xix. 47 we find that this must have been at a very early period, probably not long after the death of Joshua.

days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell *in;* for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not
2 fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came *to* mount Ephraim,
3 to the house of Micah, they lodged there. When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in
4 this *place?* and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath
5 hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto him, Ask *counsel*, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether
6 our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way
7 wherein ye go. Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt

no king in Israel] There can be little doubt that this repetition implies a condemnation of the lawless proceedings related in this chapter. See ch. xvii. 6, xix. 1, xxi. 25.

all their *inheritance*] Lit. *in* or *for an inheritance*. But a comparison with Josh. xix. 47 shews that the true sense of the original is given in our version. A portion of the territory had been assigned them, but it was insufficient. And (ch. i. 34) they had been unable to take possession even of all that had been assigned them.

2. *coasts*] Literally *ends*. This is usually interpreted to mean from the *whole* of the people. So also in 1 Kings xii. 31, xiii. 33; 2 Kings xvii. 32. A kindred word has this meaning in Numb. xxii. 41. The LXX. and Vulgate render by *kindred*.

men of valour] Literally *men, sons of valour*.

3. *When*] The verse is parenthetical, and explains how they came to lodge there.

knew the voice] Where they had seen him before we are not told. But (1) the tribes of Judah and Dan were near together, and (2) the Levite may in his wanderings (as indeed the questions of the Danites almost imply) have visited the tribe of Dan.

makest thou] Lit. *art thou doing*.

what hast thou] Probably "what means of subsistence," or "pay."

5. *ask counsel*] No doubt after the same form as was used in the true worship of Jehovah. See ch. i. 1.

6. *before the Lord*] Lit. *direct before Jehovah*.

7. *Laish*] Or *Leshem*, Josh. xix. 47. It was in the extreme north

careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no business with *any* man. And they 8
came unto their brethren *to* Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What *say* ye? And they said, 9
Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and behold, it *is* very good: and *are* ye still? be not slothful to go, *and* to enter to possess the land. When 10
ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.

11—21. *The Danites seize Micah's Seraphim.*

And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, 11

of Israel, as the expression "from Dan even unto Beersheba" implies. Canon Tristram (*Bible Places*, p. 280) says: at the head of the plain at the south west angle of the base of Mount Hermon stands "a singularly-shaped flat-topped circular mound, half-a-mile in diameter, but only eighty feet high," bearing, one would suppose, some slight resemblance to the site of the ancient city of Old Sarum. It still is called Tell-el-Kadi, the mound of the judge, Dan having the signification of *judge* (see Gen. xxx. 6, xlix. 16).

therein] Lit. *in its midst.*

after the manner of the Zidonians] From this hint we learn (1) that the Zidonians were a peaceful and mercantile community, and (2) that the era of the great military monarchies of Asia had not yet arisen, when rich trading nationalities were compelled to take measures for their own protection, and when Tyre found it needful to emigrate from the main land to the island fortress, afterwards so famous. This retreat to the island, according to Movers (*Phönizier*, Vol. II. Pt. I. 180), began about the eighth century B.C.

no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in anything] Lit. *no one in the land to injure them in any matter* (or *at all*), *a possessor of power.* The LXX. renders *and there was no one disturbing or bringing them to shame a word* (this is the literal translation of the Hebrew *davar*, which also means *thing*) *in the land.* The Vulgate, *no one at all of great wealth who opposed them.* What is meant is that no great potentate or powerful neighbour of any kind was near to harass them by invasion. The word translated *put them to shame* also means *causing injury.*

9. *and* are *ye still?*] Or, perhaps, *and ye* are *still.*

10. *a large land*] Lit. *the land* is *broad on the two hands*, i.e. widely extended on all sides, not cooped up in mountains as the Danites were. See ch. i. 34.

out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed
12 *with* weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched in
Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place
Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-
13 jearim. And they passed thence *unto* mount Ephraim, and
14 came unto the house of Micah. Then answered the five
men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said
unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these
houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a
molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.
15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the
young man the Levite, *even unto* the house of Micah, and
16 saluted him. And the six hundred men appointed *with*
their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan,
17 stood *by* the entering of the gate. And the five men that
went to spy out the land went up, *and* came in thither, *and*
took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim,
and the molten image: and the priest stood *in* the entering
of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed

11—21. The Danites seize Micah's Seraphim.

11. *appointed*] Lit. *girded*, as margin.

12. *Kirjath-jearim*] Now Kuriet-el-Enab (the city of the grape). By some the city has been placed farther south. But it is identified with Kuriet-el-Enab by the following considerations: (1) it is near Gibeon (Josh. ix. 17), (2) it is here said to be on the way between Zorah and Eshtaol, in Dan, and mount Ephraim, and (3) the situation seems to agree best with the description of the border of Judah given in Josh. xv. 8—10. Lieut. Conder, however, in his last survey (1881) thinks he has found additional evidence to identify it with 'Arma.

Mahaneh-dan] See ch. xiii. 25.

14. *answered*] This is the usual meaning of the Hebrew word. But it sometimes means to *speak*, as in Job iii. 2. The Vulgate renders here by *dixerunt*.

an ephod] See vers. 4 and 5.

consider] The speech itself, no less than the action which was afterwards taken, is proof enough of the lawless condition of the country at that time.

have to do] Rather, **will** do.

15. *turned thitherward*] i. e. out of the main road, this being the signification of the Hebrew. See ch. iv. 18, xix. 12.

saluted him] Lit. as margin, "*asked him of peace*," i. e. inquired after his welfare.

16. *appointed*] See note on *v.* 11. So in the next verse.

with weapons of war. And these went *into* Micah's house, 18
and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim,
and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them,
What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay 19
thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a
father and a priest: *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto
the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe
and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, 20
and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven
image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned 21
and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the
carriage before them.

22—26. *The complaint of Micah and its result.*

And when they were a good way from the house of 22
Micah, the men that *were* in the houses near to Micah's
house were gathered together, and overtook the children of

18. *And these went*] After the Hebrew fashion, the writer emphasizes his previous account by a fuller detail. In the former verse the priest is simply represented as standing by. Now we find that he remonstrates.

19. *family*] Either as in ch. xiii. 2 (where see note) or a subdivision of the tribe, as in Josh. vii. 17.

21. *and put*] With a view to secure them in the case of a sudden attack by Micah and his neighbours. The unsettled state of Palestine would make them only too well accustomed to precautions against sudden attack. The Canaanites were as yet unsubdued (see ch. i.), and no doubt predatory excursions frequently swept the country.

carriage] Lit. the *valuables*. This word, which now signifies that which carries, i. e. a vehicle, in the times of the A. V. signified that which *was carried*, luggage, baggage—see Acts xxi. 15. The termination *-age* (a Romance abbreviation of the Mediaeval Latin termination *-aticum*) properly signifies a state or condition, as *courage*, *savage*, *voyage*. It began about A. D. 1300 to be added, instead of the earlier *hede* or head, to English words, as *bondage* (formerly *bondehede*). In the word *carriage* in the sense of *behaviour*, in which sense it is still used, the termination conforms to the general rule. But the active sense of the termination, as when *carriage* means *that which carries*, is unusual. We probably use it, however, when we speak of the *cordage* of a vessel. At least this word may serve to explain the transition from the passive to the active. So we speak of *stoppage*, leakage, and the like.

22—26. THE COMPLAINT OF MICAH AND ITS RESULT.

22. *overtook*] Lit. *caused to cleave*. See ch. xx. 45, where it is less correctly rendered "pursued hard after them." Cf. also ch. xx. 42.

23 Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth
24 thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is*
25 this *that* ye say unto me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life,
26 with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

27—31. *The Capture of Laish.*

27 And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people *that were* at quiet and secure: and they smote them with
28 the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And *there was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Beth-rehob. And they built a city, and

23. *comest with such a company*] Lit. *art called together*. See ch. iv. 13.

25. *angry fellows*] Lit. *men bitter of soul*. Cf. 2 Sam. xvii. 8, marg. The same word is translated *life* in the rest of the verse.

run] See ch. viii. 21, xv. 12, where the word is the same as here. It most probably means *lay hands on*.

lose] The word here used is unusual. It means originally to *collect*. Hence comes the meaning to *take away*. Hence to destroy, as in 1 Sam. xv. 6. The threats of the children of Dan were more delicately veiled, perhaps, than is usual in a rude age. The language may have been a survival of the rigid discipline of Joshua and Moses. But there could be no mistake as to its meaning. If Micah persisted in claiming his property, they intended to retain it by force.

27—31. The Capture of Laish.

28. *from Zidon*] That there was some kinship between the inhabitants of this city and the Zidonians would seem to be intimated here. See also *v.* 7.

in the valley that lieth *by Beth-rehob*] Or which leadeth *to Beth-rehob*. For the word translated valley see ch. i. 19, note. Beth-rehob is supposed by Robinson and Canon Tristram to be Hunin, south-west of Tell-el-Kadi or Dan. See Numb. xiii. 21, where it is described as the northern extremity of Palestine, and 2 Sam. x. 6, 8. It was at the

dwelt therein, and they called the name of the city Dan, 29
after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto
Israel: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laish at the first.
And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and 30
Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he
and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day
of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's 31

entrance to the Buk'eia (see note on ch. iii. 3). The word Rehob signifies *breadth*. See note on *v.* 10.

a city] Rather the city, which had been partly laid in ruins by the siege. So the LXX.

30. *Jonathan*] or "the gift of God." Compare our early Archbishop Deusdedit, A. D. 654.

Manasseh] The Targum and the Syriac. The Vulgate has "Moysi." There can be no doubt that this is the correct reading. Even the Masorites note that the Nun which converts *Mosheh* into M'nasheh is a Nun t'louiah, i. e. a Nun *suspended*, as it were, above the line. It has obviously been introduced to avoid the scandal of the grandson of the great lawgiver having become the founder of an idolatrous religion. But the fact can hardly be evaded. Manasseh had no son named Gershom, but Moses had. See Exod. ii. 22, xviii. 3, 4; 1 Chron. xxiii. 15, 16, xxvi. 24. And the fact is only too familiar a one, that name or reputation, however great or deserved, is not sufficient to keep the descendants of him who owned it in the right way, if they be disposed to disgrace their ancestry. The Rabbis have some singular explanations of the fact. Thus the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra f. 109 b) says that it was because Jonathan did the deeds of the wicked Manasseh, king of Israel, that Scripture assigns him to that family. That the unwillingness to admit so rapid a falling away in the family of Moses existed at a very early period, appears from the fact that all the best copies of the LXX. contain the emendation.

the captivity of the land] If this signifies the captivity by Sennacherib, we must either believe that this passage was added by a later hand, or that the book itself was composed after Israel had been finally led away captive. But we are not compelled to adopt either of these suppositions. As Drusius asks, "Who would believe that the idolatrous worship of Micah could have been maintained at Dan during the reign of David?" The establishment of the worship of the golden calf by Jeroboam, too, would have been fatal to it. Besides, we have no mention of it after this date, and it seems impossible, in the great revival of the Mosaic ritual under Samuel, David and Solomon, that we should have had no mention of the Danite *cultus*, had it subsisted so long. We have also another note of time. The worship of Micah's image continued "all the time that the ark was in Shiloh." This places the termination of that worship at the time of the memorable defeat recorded in 1 Sam. iv. Thus the "captivity" would seem to mean the Philistine domination, which extended, no

graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

Ch. XIX. 1—30. *The outrage at Gibeah.*

19 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine
2 out of Beth-lehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole

doubt, even as far as Dan. This is the opinion of Kimchi, Grotius, and many others, and it is confirmed by the Hebrew of 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22, where the expression "captivity of the land" is replaced by "captivity of the glory of Israel."

was in Shiloh] This shews that the worship set up by Micah and conducted by the grandson of Moses was in deliberate opposition to the true worship of God in Shiloh. This, which was bad enough when confined to a private family, became far worse when extended to a considerable portion of a tribe. It is not impossible that jealousy at the comparatively unimportant part he had to play, in contrast with the distinguished position of the great lawgiver, may have influenced Jonathan in the step he took.

Ch. XIX. 1—30. The outrage at Gibeah.

The incidents related in this and the following chapters illustrate, and are intended to illustrate, the condition of Israel under the Judges. "The condition of Israel had, through the death of Joshua, become extremely unsettled. The only bond of union is to be sought in Phinehas, who, as being in possession of the Divine oracles, could exercise a certain amount of influence upon the heads of the tribes and the elders who exercised with him a joint authority, but who could not introduce a thorough and uniform system of government." Jost, *Geschichte des Israelitischen Volkes*, I. 167.

1. *Levite*] "There is no complaint of a publikely disordered state, where a Levite is not at one end of it; either as an agent, or as a patient.... No tribe shall sooner feele the want of government, than that of Levi." Bp. Hall.

side] That is either the *flanks*, or, more probably, the *recesses*, i.e. the more retired portions of the mountain district. So Is. xxxvii. 24, Ps. xlviii. 3, where our version has "sides of the north;" but what is probably meant is that Zion is the joy of the *distant parts* (i.e. difficult of access), of the north. The LXX. has μηροῖς.

concubine] See note on ch. viii. 31.

Beth-lehem-judah] Both these fragments of early history, as well as the book of Ruth, are connected in some way with Beth-lehem. See Introduction, Ch. I.

months. And her husband arose, and went after her, to 3
speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his
servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought
him *into* her father's house: and when the father of the
damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father 4
in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with
him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged
there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they 5
arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and
the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine
heart *with* a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.
And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them 6
together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be
content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart
be merry. And when the man rose up to depart, his father 7
in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. And 8
he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart:
and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray
thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat

four whole months] Lit. *days, four months.* See ch. xiv. 8, xv. 1.

3. *and her husband arose*] This expression implies that the relations between the man and his concubine were recognised by the Jewish law. His affection for her was great enough to excuse her unfaithfulness. The LXX. and Vulgate, as well as the Targum, attempt to soften down the misconduct of the woman. But our version, as well as the Arabic and Syriac, unquestionably gives the true sense of the Hebrew.

friendly] Lit. *to her heart.*

to bring her again] The Hebrew text has "to bring *it*, i. e. her heart, again." Our version follows the Masoretic correction.

his servant] Lit. *a young man*, but used here in the sense of an attendant, as *v.* 11 proves.

a couple] Lit. *a yoke.*

she brought him] The reconciliation was evidently instantaneous.

rejoiced to meet him] Here, at least, in the conduct of the Levite and his father-in-law is a picture of simplicity of feeling and life which stands out brightly by contrast with the dark features of the terrible story that follows.

4. *retained him*] The Heb. is significant of the warmth of the reception, *laid fast hold on him.*

5. *Comfort*] Rather, **strengthen**, or **stay**. So in *v.* 8. See also Gen. xviii. 5 and margin, 1 Kings xiii. 7.

6. *Be content*] Lit. *be willing.* See ch. xvii. 11, also note on ch. i. 27. The LXX. here and elsewhere translates *begin.*

8. *tarried*] Rather, **lingered.** See note on ch. iii. 6.

9 both of them. And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold now, the day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou
10 mayest go home. But the man would not tarry *that* night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which *is* Jerusalem; and *there were* with him two asses sad-
11 dled, his concubine also *was* with him. *And* when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into
12 this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that *is* not of the children of Israel; we will

afternoon] Lit. *the declining of the day.*

9. *draweth towards evening*] Lit. *slackens to be dark*, i.e. darkness will soon come on. This was the fact. They had not ridden above seven miles before they were obliged to think of shelter for the night. Rabbi Kimchi explains the phrase thus: the strength of the day is at noon, its slackening or weakening when light and heat become feebler, i.e. towards eventide.

the day groweth to an end] Lit. *the bending of the day.*

that thou mayest go home] Lit. *to thy tent.* This picture of the pressing invitations of the warm-hearted host, and the irresolution of the invited guest, anxious to depart, yet unwilling to displease by refusing to stay, gives a life-like touch to the narrative.

10. *But the man would not tarry that night*] "His resolution at last breakes thorow those kind hinderances.... It is a good hearing that the Levite makes haste home. A good man's heart is where his calling is." Bp. Hall.

Jebus] Here we have the ancient name of the city. It is only found again in 1 Chron. xi. 4, 5. It was probably the provincial name, by which the town was called in its immediate neighbourhood. The name Jerusalem (or rather Jeru*shalaim*—"secure foundation") was that by which the strong mountain fastness was more widely known. The occurrence of the local name in these two passages suggests that the historian had contemporaneous documents before him when he wrote.

two asses] Lit., as above, *a yoke of asses.*

11. *was far spent*] Lit. *was gone down exceedingly.*

his master] Heb. his *lord.* So in the next verse.

this city of the Jebusites] Jerusalem, therefore, had never continued in the hands of the Jews, though they may have taken and destroyed some portion of it. See note on ch. i. 8.

12. *a stranger*] The Levite feared the lawless habits of the Phœnician

pass over to Gibeah. And he said unto his servant, Come, 13
and let us draw near to one of *these* places to lodge all
night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. And they passed on and 14
went *their way;* and the sun went down upon them *when
they were* by Gibeah, which *belongeth* to Benjamin. And 15
they turned aside thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah:
and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the
city: for *there was* no man that took them into *his* house to
lodging.

cities, in which such proceedings as those at Gibeah were regarded as a way of doing honour to their gods. But the people of Gibeah had only too fully learned—even thus early—the lessons of unrestrained licence taught them by their Phœnician neighbours.

Gibeah] The meaning is *Hill-town*. The frequent occurrence of such names as Gibeon, Gibeah (or Gibeath), Geba (or Gaba), would remind us, if we were tempted to forget it, of the fact that Palestine was essentially a hill country. So also do the names Ramah, or Ramath, or Ramoth (high place—see next verse), Mizpah (watch-tower), which were of frequent occurrence. We may compare the frequency with which *berg* in German and *bryn* (hill) in Welsh occur as names of places. See also Dean Stanley's remarks (*Sinai and Palestine*, ch. iv.). Some have supposed Geba or Gaba to have been identical with Gibeah. But this is impossible (see Josh. xviii. 24, 28, and Is. x. 29, where they are distinguished from one another). This Gibeah (there is another mentioned in Josh. xv. 57) is better known as Gibeah of Saul. See 1 Sam. x. 26, xi. 4, xiii. 2, 15, 16 (where the Heb. text has Geba, but probably erroneously), xv. 34; 2 Sam. xxi. 6, &c. It was in the tribe of Benjamin, and is identified by Canon Tristram as well as Robinson and Ritter with Tuleil el Ful, four miles east of Mizpeh and rather more than four miles north of Jerusalem, twenty furlongs according to Josephus (*Ant.* v. 2). Lieut. Conder, however, has supposed it not to be the name of a town, but of a district near Jerusalem. See Appendix, Note IV. Mr Kirkpatrick (*Commentary on 1 Samuel*) supposes that by the hill of God, 1 Sam. x. 5 (Gibeath Elohim), Gibeah is meant.

13. *Ramah*] See note on ch. iv. 5. Beside the number of places of which Ramath or Ramoth forms a part of the name, there are three places called Ramah in the Bible. Of these one was in Lower, the other in Upper Galilee (Josh. xix. 21, 36). The Ramah mentioned here was, like Gibeah, in the territory of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25).

15. *a street of the city*] Lit. *a broad place*. Hence it may have been (1) a wide street (it is so translated in Jer. ix. 21, but in Jer. v. 1 it has been rendered *broad places*), like the Greek πλατεῖα, or (2) what we now call a square (the French *place*, the Italian *piazza*—derived from πλατεῖα). See also Deut. xiii. 16. The LXX. renders here and elsewhere by πλατεῖα.

took] Lit. *gathered*. So marg. in *v.* 18.

16 And behold, there came an old man from his work out of
the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and he
sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Ben-
17 jamites. And when he had lift up his eyes, he saw a way-
faring man in the street of the city: and the old man said,
18 Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said
unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward
the side of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went
to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am *now* going *to* the house of the
LORD; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to house.
19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and
there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid,
and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is*
20 no want of anything. And the old man said, Peace *be*
with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only
21 lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house,
and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their

16. *And behold*] The narrative in this verse is true to human nature in all ages. The circumstances narrated might have happened yesterday, in any part of the world. The old man coming in from his work (the inhospitality of the people of the town, it is to be feared, might sometimes find a parallel now), his meeting with people from his own neighbourhood, and the interest he, as a sojourner among strangers, is thereby moved to take in them, their willing acceptance of his offer of a lodging, and his generous resolution to provide them with food as well, though they declared they did not need it—all this gives a very vivid and pleasing picture of the life of at least some among the people in that far distant age.

17. *a wayfaring man*] Rather, the wayfaring man, or, as we should say, *the traveller*.

18. *side*] See *v.* 1.

but I am now *going to the house of the Lord*] If (1) we accept this translation we must suppose that the Levite was actually going to Shiloh, near which he resided, for it was in the mountain district of Ephraim (see ch. xxi. 19). Or (2) we may take the word translated "going" of the Levite's profession or walk in life (as in Ps. i. 1). Cassel and Keil prefer the later translation. The LXX. has "unto *my* house."

19. *provender*] Heb. *mixture*, i.e. of grain and other kinds of food. See Is. xxx. 24; Job vi. 5, xxiv. 6 (marg.). The English word, like *prebend*, comes from the Latin *praebenda*, things granted for sustenance. The Italian *provianda* suggests the idea of *provisions for the way*, but the idea was probably suggested, as in many other instances, by similarity of sound. The French *provende*, and our English word, retain the true derivation.

feet, and did eat and drink. *Now* as they were making 22
their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons
of Belial, beset the house round about, *and* beat at the door,
and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying,
Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we
may know him. And the man, the master of the house, 23
went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren,
nay, I pray you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is
come into mine house, do not this folly. Behold, *here is* my 24
daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring
out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what
seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a
thing. But the men would not hearken to him: so the man 25
took his concubine, and brought *her* forth unto them; and
they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morn-
ing: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

thy servants] In speaking of his concubine as a handmaid and himself as a servant, he was but following the universal custom of the East. See Gen. xviii. 3 (where it is to be remembered that Abraham did not yet know the character of his guests; cf. *v.* 1); 1 Sam. i. 16; 2 Kings iv. 16.

22. *sons of Belial*] Belial signifies worthlessness; sons of Belial, worthless men; cf. our familiar expression *good-for-nothing*, and the French *gens qui ne valent rien*. So also "daughter of Belial," 1 Sam. i. 16, a "thing of Belial," i.e. a wicked thing, Deut. xv. 9; Ps. xli. 8 (marg.), &c. Milton has personified what is purely an abstract conception in *Paradise Lost*, Book I. 109—118.

beat] The word itself (see Gen. xxxiii. 13), and especially the reflective conjugation which is used here (see Ewald, *Heb. Gr.* 124 a) seem, to imply an eager knocking or pushing at the door, such that each one strove as eagerly for himself as though no one else were doing so. The reflective voice of the verb is formed in Hebrew from the intensitive. The narrative henceforth bears a close resemblance to that in Gen. xix., but without the miracle.

23. *folly*] With the sense of wickedness, as in Gen. xxxiv. 7; Josh. vii. 15. So also ch. xx. 6, 10.

24. *so vile a thing*] Heb., as marg., *the matter of this folly*. See last note. However much the Jewish law may have done to raise the position of women—and it did a good deal (though it must be admitted that an exception exists in the case of early Assyrian and Babylonian history)—they yet were in a very inferior position, as this sad history shews. Under our Christian civilization a man would be utterly disgraced who could descend to conduct like this.

25. *when the day began to spring*] Lit. *at the going up of the dawn*.

26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down *at* the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, till
27 it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and behold, the woman his concubine *was* fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the thresh-
28 hold. And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.
29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts
30 of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such *deed* done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

26. *in the dawning of the day*] Lit. *at the turning* or *appearing of the morning*.

27. *doors*] See ch. iii. 24.

to go his way] It does not follow, because nothing is said about a search for his wife here, that he meant to leave her behind. The whole tenor of the narrative forbids us to suppose this.

door] Heb. *opening*.

28. *upon an ass*] Rather, upon **the** ass.

gat him] Heb. *went*. Nothing is said of his feelings here. But what they were may be gathered from what follows. His grief and indignation were shewn in a manner terrible even to men in that rude age, as the sequel shews.

29. *knife*] A common eating-knife, as we learn from the derivation. The original has **the** knife.

divided] As in sacrifice. See Exod. xxix. 17 ("cut in pieces," A.V.); Levit. i. 6. See also 1 Sam. xi. 7.

together with] Or "even to," or "according to" (so LXX.), i.e. describing the manner in which the deed was done.

coasts] Heb. *border*, or *boundary*.

30. *And it was so*] The copies of the LXX. have considerable variations in the rendering of *vv.* 28—30, but none of them are of much importance. But the Alexandrian Codex and many other editions add after this verse "and he charged the men whom he sent forth, saying, Thus shall ye say to every man of Israel, If it hath taken place according to this word from the day of the going up of the sons of Israel from Egypt unto this day. Take counsel concerning this and speak." The very close adherence to the Hebrew idiom in the Greek here translated, as well as the Hebrew habit of repetition, make it extremely probable that we have here a genuine passage which has been omitted by an early copyist from the fact that most of it has been repeated twice over.

CH. XX. 1—10. *The deliberation and decision of Israel.*

Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congre- 20
gation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD *in* Mizpeh. And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword.

take advice] Translated *give* advice in ch. xx. 7, *take counsel* in Is. viii. 10.

CH. XX. 1—10. THE DELIBERATION AND DECISION OF ISRAEL.

1. *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] That is, as a glance at the map shews, from one extremity of Israel to the other. See also note on ch. xviii. 28, and 1 Sam. iii. 20; 2 Sam. iii. 10, &c. It is a slight but not unimportant token of historical accuracy that Israel is not said, on a similar occasion not long previously (Josh. xxii. 12), to have come together "from Dan even unto Beer-sheba." Such an expression is not used until after the time when Dan became the northern boundary of the Israelite territory. Beer-sheba (the well of the oath) is familiar to the readers of the Pentateuch. See Gen. xxi. 14, xxii. 19, xxvi. 33. It still keeps its ancient name, and is known as Bîr Seba, where three wells are still to be found. So the latest explorer, Lieut. Conder. See also Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine*, 403; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, 372.

with the land of Gilead] Thus the expression "from Dan even unto Beer-sheba" was not supposed to include the land of Gilead. And indeed the inclusion of the country beyond Jordan would have been geographically inaccurate. The close connection between Israel east of the Jordan with the rest of Israel confirms the view that these events occurred soon after the death of Joshua. Cf. Josh. xxii.

unto the Lord] It would seem from *vv.* 18, 23, 26—28 (and notes), that the ark had been removed from Shiloh. No doubt the ark on occasions of importance like the present was moved from Shiloh. See also note on *v.* 18.

in Mizpeh] Not the Mizpeh or Mizpah of ch. x. 17, xi. 11, which was beyond Jordan. This Mizpeh was Mizpah in Benjamin. It was four miles from Gibeah (see above, ch. xix. 12) and was situated on the loftiest hill in the neighbourhood. It is now known as Nebi Samwil (the prophet Samuel), being the traditional place of his residence while he judged Israel (see 1 Sam. vii. 5—17, x. 17, &c.). Lieut. Conder thinks it was the same as Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1, xxii. 9—19). There were several other places of this name. See Josh. xi. 3, xv. 38; 1 Sam. xxii. 3.

2. *chief*] Lit. *pinnacles* or *angles*. See 1 Sam. xiv. 38 (marg.); Ps. cxviii. 22; Is. xix. 13 (marg.), &c.

presented themselves] Lit. *stationed themselves*.

that drew sword] It was a military assembly, ready for active mea-

3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of
Israel were gone up *to* Mizpeh.) Then said the children of
4 Israel, Tell *us*, how was this wickedness? And the Levite,
the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and
said, I came into Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my
5 concubine, to lodge. And the men of Gibeah rose against
me, and beset the house round about upon me by night,
and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they
6 forced, that she is dead. And I took my concubine, and cut
her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the
inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and
7 folly in Israel. Behold, ye *are* all children of Israel; give
8 here your advice and counsel. And all the people arose as

sures in case the Benjamites should refuse satisfaction. No doubt Mizpeh was chosen because of its nearness to Gibeah. The number, as compared with the scanty numbers that followed Gideon, indicates a time before the bond of union between the tribes had been loosened by misfortune and sin.

3. *Now the children of Benjamin*] This verse is correctly placed in a parenthesis in the A. V. The reason of its insertion here is probably the idea in the mind of the writer that the Benjamites intentionally absented themselves, and thus threw in their lot with the offenders in their tribe. See *vv.* 12—14.

how was this wickedness?] Rather, how was this wickedness **done?**

5. *men*] Lit. *lords*, as in ch. ix. 2. Cf. Josh. xxiv. 11.

thought to have slain me] The men of Gibeah had not expressly said this, but the Levite was justified in assuming that they would have dealt no more tenderly with him than with his concubine.

6. *country*] Heb. *field*, Luther *felder*. Other versions translate with more or less freedom.

lewdness] The word *lewdness* in the A. V. has not always the meaning it has since acquired. See Acts xvii. 5, xviii. 14. Derived from the old English *leod* (the same as the Greek λαός) it originally meant much the same as our word *common* or *vulgar*. But inasmuch as the manners of the common people were too often gross, the word came to have this latter meaning. Both the earlier and the later meaning occur in Chaucer. Compare

> For *lewed* people loven tales olde.
> *Pardoners Tale.*

And

> Swiche olde *lewed* wordes used he.
> *Marchantes Tale.*

The stronger meaning is undoubtedly suggested here by the Hebrew, which has undergone a similar degradation, meaning originally only *purpose*, and then *evil* purpose. See Levit. xviii. 17.

one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his house. But now this *shall be* 9
the thing which we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* by lot against it; and we will take ten men of an hundred through- 10
out all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that *they* may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.

11—17. *The action of Israel and Benjamin's reply.*

So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, 11
knit together as one man.

8. *tent*] This word came to have the sense of *habitation* when the Israelites were settled in Palestine. Cf. Ps. cxxxii. 3; Is. xvi. 5.

turn] The word has generally the meaning of turning aside from the way. See for instance ch. xix. 11, 12. It seems here to imply that to go home leaving this crime unpunished would be a dereliction of duty.

9. we will go up *by lot*] Keil prefers the rendering "we will cast lots upon it," which is given by the Syriac, and supposes that the city is doomed to destruction, like the cities of the Canaanites. But the words "we will go," supplied by the A. V., following the LXX., are not against the context, and inasmuch as they are almost identical in Hebrew with the *against it* that follows, they may easily have been omitted by the copyist. The answer of God given in *v.* 18 may have been given by the casting of the lot, after a religious service in the tabernacle. The lot was frequently used as a means of discovering the Divine will. See Josh. vii. 16, xiv. 2; 1 Sam. x. 20, 21.

10. *to fetch victual for the people*] These *commissariat* arrangements, as we should call them, shew that the people (1) were accustomed to war, and (2) that it was expected, from the absence of the Benjamites from the assembly, that the warlike operations would take some time. See also note on *v.* 15. For *victual* (Heb.) see note on ch. vii. 8, and for the English word ch. xvii. 10.

to Gibeah] The Hebrew here has *Geba*, the final He having been accidentally left out.

11—17. THE ACTION OF ISRAEL AND BENJAMIN'S REPLY.

11. *knit together as one man*] Lit. *as one man, confederates.* The LXX. does not translate the word *confederates.* It is quite possible that it is a later gloss. The unanimity of Israel speaks highly for the national character at this time, just as subsequent disorganization is only too clear an indication of retrogression. Never under the kings, says Bertheau, "was there so united, strong, earnest an Israel, undertaking from the very highest motives a struggle of the most arduous description. Here we feel the effect of the grand days of Moses and

12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe
of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done
13 among you? Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the chil-
dren of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them
to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children
of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren
14 the children of Israel: but the children of Benjamin gathered
themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out
15 to battle against the children of Israel. And the children
of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities
twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the
inhabitants of Gibeah, *which* were numbered seven hundred
16 chosen men. Among all this people *there were* seven hun-

Joshua." See also Hengstenberg, *History of the Kingdom of God*, II. 3, 3.

12. *tribe of Benjamin*] The original has *tribes*, an unusual expression. But the Yod may have crept into the text by mistake. See ch. xxi. 8.

13. *put away*] Lit. *burn up*.

children of Benjamin] The words "children of" are supplied by the Masorites here. They are not in the text, but are to be found in the LXX. It is most probable that as the word B'ni occurs twice over, in the first place as *sons* and in the next as the first three letters of the word Benjamin, they have been omitted by mistake.

their brethren] No doubt put in by the historian to heighten the reader's sense of the folly and obstinacy of Benjamin.

15. *numbered*] Lit. *visited*. Perhaps better **mustered**. See also *v.* 17.

twenty and six thousand] The LXX. (Codex Alex.) reads twenty-five thousand. This agrees best with *vv.* 35, 47, according to which 25,100 fell in battle and 600 escaped, though, as Keil observes, some may also have fallen in the former engagements. The Vulgate has this reading. The Codex Vaticanus of the LXX., however, has 23,000. If it be asked how the Benjamites could possibly have resisted so overwhelming a force of their adversaries, the answer may be found in the precipitous nature of the country, where the sling (*v.* 16) and the bow could be used from under cover with murderous effect against a foe unable to come to close quarters. As with Joshua at Ai—in this very neighbourhood, be it remembered, and (to use a more modern example) William the Conqueror at Senlac, nothing but a feigned flight could avail to draw the enemy from their vantage ground. Hence, too, the apparently inexplicable question (*v.* 18), "Which of us shall go up first?" Numbers gave no advantage in such a conflict. Only tried skill and valour was of any avail. And experience in mountain warfare (ch. i. 1—20) was pre-eminently the possession of the tribe of Judah.

dred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at a hair *breadth*, and not miss. And the men of Israel, 17
beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these *were* men of war.

18—48. *The conflict at Gibeah.*

And the children of Israel arose, and went up *to* the house 18
of God, and asked *counsel* of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first. And 19

16. *seven hundred chosen men*] These must not be confounded with the men of Gibeah.

lefthanded] See ch. iii. 15.

at a hair breadth] Lit. *to the hair*, and so LXX. The Vulgate has "so that they could hit a hair." And Rabbi Tanchum explains that they could *aim at an hair and hit it!* The meaning is, of course, that, as we should say, they could hit their mark within an hair's breadth.

miss] It is perhaps worth remarking that from the Hebrew word here used the word signifying *sin* is derived. The same conception is preserved in N. T. Greek.

17. *four hundred thousand*] See *v.* 2.

18—48. THE CONFLICT AT GIBEAH.

18. *to the house of God*] Or, to **Beth-el**. We must either suppose (1) that Beth-el here means the tabernacle itself, or (2) with authorities such as Keil, Bertheau, Jost, that the tabernacle, after having been taken to Mizpah from the urgent need of immediate consultation with the oracle, was now removed out of the immediate proximity of the fight to Beth-el, "the rendezvous of the military portion of the community" (Bertheau). This is no doubt the meaning of *v.* 27. See note there and on *v.* 31. See also 1 Sam. x. 3, which, however, implies that the tabernacle was then at Beth-el. The tabernacle is called the "house of Jehovah," or of Elohim, but never the "house of El." Bethel was about 10 miles from Mizpah. Jost remarks how early the loose observance of the Law appears to have crept in. Already is the ark taken from place to place, as necessity requires. Already we hear nothing of the three yearly gatherings, but only of the ark being used to inquire by. Nor does the mention of the yearly feast of the daughters of Shiloh (ch. xxi. 19) appear to have been kept by many beside themselves. With this agrees the consistent absence of any further mention of the worship of Jehovah. See Introduction.

asked counsel of God] See note on ch. i. 1.

first] Lit. *at the beginning*, here and below. Cf. also ch. i. 1. The Vulg. has *princeps certaminis*. Luther, better, *anzufangen*.

And the Lord said] Lit. and **Jehovah** said. "It is *Jehovah* that

the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped
20 against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to battle
against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put *themselves* in
21 array to fight against them at Gibeah. And the children of
Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed *down* to
the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thou-
22 sand men. And the people the men of Israel encouraged
themselves, and set *their* battle again in array in the place
23 where they put *themselves* in array the first day. (And the
children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until
even, and asked *counsel* of the LORD, saying, Shall I go
up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my
24 brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) And
the children of Israel came near against the children of
25 Benjamin the second day. And Benjamin went forth against
them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed *down* to
the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand
26 men; all these drew the sword. Then all the children of
Israel, and all the people, went up, and came *unto* the house
of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted
that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace

answers, but the inquiry was addressed to *Elohim*." Cassel. See note on ch. xvi. 28.

20. *put themselves in array*] Or, as we should say, *drew up in order of battle.*

22. *encouraged themselves*] Lit. *strengthened* themselves. The Berlerburger Bible thinks that it was a sign of vain-glory that they took up the same position on the second day. But there seems no reason for believing this, though we may well believe that Israel had already deserved the chastisement which this conflict brought on them. This verse is out of its chronological place, as is so often the case in Hebrew narrative. The Israelites first implored guidance after their reverse, and then proceeded to take up the position of the previous day.

23. *until even*] No doubt, of the day of the first fight. The troops of Judah had been unskilfully handled and had fallen into confusion, and the Benjamites rushed from their hiding places and cut them down in their retreat. Hence a very great and rapid slaughter, early in the day, and a hasty retreat, after which a large number betook themselves to Bethel and spent the rest of the day in religious exercises.

go up] The phrase here is somewhat unusual; literally, *approach.*

my brother] The words indicate a desire to withdraw from this intestine strife.

26. *and offered burnt offerings*] The religious observances were of

offerings before the LORD. And the children of Israel in- 27
quired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God
was there in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, 28
the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying,
Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of
Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD
said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine
hand. And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. 29
And the children of Israel went up against the children of 30
Benjamin on the third day, and put *themselves* in array
against Gibeah, as at other times. And the children of Ben- 31
jamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away
from the city; and they began to smite of the people, *and*
kill, as at other times, in the highways, *of* which one goeth
up *to* the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field,

a more solemn character on this second occasion. We read of no fasting, nor offering of burnt offerings and peace offerings on the previous occasion. For the burnt offering see Lev. i., for the peace offering, Lev. iii., vii. 11—21, 29—34. The peace offering was either (1) an offering to make peace or reconciliation with God (Lev. vii. 16), or (2) an offering of thanks for mercies received (Lev. vii. 12—15). See Kurz, *Mosaische Opfer*, pp. 130, 131.

27. *inquired of the Lord*] They inquired of Jehovah, at the ark of the covenant of Elohim. Thus Jehovah and Elohim were convertible terms. See note on *v.* 18.

in those days] i.e. just at the time of the war. Evidently this was not its usual place. See notes on *vv.* 1, 18. These words confirm the conclusion which has been there arrived at.

28. *Phinehas*] See Numb. xxv. 7; Josh. xxii. 13, 30. No more consistent character meets us in Scripture than that of Phinehas, both in the burning zeal of his youth and in the respect which his steady adherence to duty won for him in later years, as evidenced by his being chosen for the head of the embassy mentioned in Josh. xxii.

stood before it] See Deut. x. 8, xviii. 5.

or shall I cease?] This question was not previously put (*v.* 23). It implies a desire to abandon the conflict, a desire to which the favourable answer of Jehovah puts an end.

29. *liers in wait*] The Israelites did not neglect worldly prudence. Their former method of attack was now exchanged for a more cautious one.

30. *at other times*] Lit. *as time after time.* So next verse.

31. *smite of the people, and kill*] Lit. to *smite of the people* (some) *slain.*

highways] See note on ch. v. 20.

the house of God] Marg., *Beth-el.* This is decisive as to the fact that

32 about thirty men of Israel. And the children of Benjamin said, They *are* smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them
33 from the city unto the highways. And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put *themselves* in array at Baal-tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah.
34 And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew
35 not that evil *was* near them. And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword.
36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside

Beth-el is meant. The road led to Beth-el. And there were the Israelite head-quarters, as we should say.

Gibeah in the field] i.e. the outlying districts of Gibeah. Along both these highways the Israelites advanced. See Lieut. Conder's view of Gibeah in note on ch. xix. 12.

33. *Baal-tamar*] i.e. place (Baal having frequently this sense) of the palm tree. If we are to believe Jewish tradition, this is now Attâra, a large ruin near Gibeah (Conder).

came forth] Rather, **broke out**, or, **rushed forth**.

meadows] *Ma'areh*, Heb. This word is not easy to explain. The commentators generally prefer the rendering, (1) *a bare place*. The Peshito translates, (2) by *cave* (Ma'arath), which would certainly be a better place for concealment, but in this case one would have expected the form of the word which in Hebrew is called the construct, i.e. the form a noun takes when it has another depending upon it. The Vulgate, changing the last letter of the word, render (3) *from the west*. The LXX. takes it as a proper name, Μααραγαβέ, while the Targum renders by a word kindred with *Mishor*, the usual expression for the table land beyond Jordan. The original has *Geba* here, as in *v.* 10. But no doubt Gibeah is meant. This account is very like the siege of Ai in Josh. viii.

34. *near them*] Rather, **coming close on** them. See *v.* 41 (and marg.).

35. *And the Lord smote*] As elsewhere (see for instance ch. xviii. 17—20; Josh. i. 12, iii. 2, iii. 17, iv. 10, 11), we have first a general account and then a more detailed one, *vv.* 36—43.

36. *they*] i.e. the Israelites. See *v.* 32.

beside] Lit. *upon*, i.e. against.

Gibeah. And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon 37
Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew *themselves* along, and
smote all the city with the edge of the sword. Now there 38
was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the
liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with
smoke rise up out of the city. And when the men of Israel 39
retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite *and* kill of
the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely
they are smitten down before us, as *in* the first battle. But 40
when the flame began to arise up out of the city *with* a
pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and
behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. And 41
when the men of Israel turned *again*, the men of Benjamin
were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them.

37. *rushed*] See ch. ix. 33, note.

drew themselves *along*] Rather, **advanced**, see ch. iv. 6, but there is no preposition here. We have the same idiom in our expression *draw* near.

38. *there was an appointed sign*] Heb., *the* appointed sign *was*.

a great flame with smoke] This passage has given a good deal of trouble to the commentators. Literally it runs "to multiply" (or "multiply"), "their causing to go up the lifting up of the smoke from the city." The word translated here *multiply* is a common way of expressing size or quantity (a *great* flame, A.V.). It is the apocopated form of the Heb. imperative or infinitive that gives all the trouble. "Es muss hinaus," says Bertheau, following the Syriac. The LXX. (i.e. the Vatican Codex—the Alexandrian here varies considerably), changing the first letter of the word into one similar, reads *sword*, thus assimilating the incident to that in Josh. viii. 18, but proving that we cannot omit the word altogether. The Vulgate avoids the difficulty by a periphrasis. But there seems no very valid reason why we should not translate **that they should make a great cloud** (or *column*, see Jer. vi. 1, where it is translated "sign of fire" in the A.V.) **of smoke to arise from the city.**

39. *retired*] Lit. *turned*.

to smite and kill] See *v.* 31, note.

40. *But when the flame began to ascend*] Lit. *and the lifting up* (the same word as in *v.* 38) began *to go up*.

with a pillar] There is no *with* in the original.

flame] Here the word is **destruction** (lit. *completion*).

41. *amazed*] This word, which with us signifies great surprise, had a somewhat different meaning, corresponding to the original here, in the time when the A.V. was made. Connected with the word *maze*, it means to be in hopeless perplexity. See Ezek. xxxii. 10; Mark xiv.

42 Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel
unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook
them; and them which *came* out of the cities they destroyed
43 in the midst of them. *Thus* they inclosed the Benjamites
round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down with
44 ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. And there
fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these *were*
45 men of valour. And they turned and fled toward the wilder-
ness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them
in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after
them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them.
46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty
and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these
47 *were* men of valour. But six hundred men turned and fled
to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the

33; 1 Pet. iii. 6. Also, *As you like it*, Act 1. Sc. 2, "You *amaze* me, ladies."

42. *the way of the wilderness*] See Josh. viii. 15, 24, xvi. 1.

overtook] See ch. xviii. 22, and *v.* 45.

them which came *out of the cities*] The rest of the Benjamites, as distinguished from the men of Gibeah.

43. *with ease*] Heb. *Menuchah*. The Vulgate translates, or rather paraphrases, "nor was there any rest of the dying," the LXX. strangely "to rest them rest." The passage has caused difficulty to most interpreters. Dr Cassel translates "pursued them to their resting-place," i.e. to where they halted to take breath. Menuchah signifies *rest*, and the correct translation most likely is as A.V., and the meaning *without any resistance*. But Menuchah may be a proper name, as the marg. suggests, and the correct translation may be *to Menuchah*. There is a Sar (i.e. prince) of Menuchah mentioned in Jer. li. 59. The usual translation, however, of Sar Menuchah is *chamberlain*, and it must be confessed that territorial titles are unknown elsewhere in Hebrew history.

over against] Lit., as marg., *unto* over against.

45. *the rock of Rimmon*] The place is still called *Rummon*, and is "on the very edge of the hill country, with a precipitous descent towards the Jordan valley" (Canon Tristram, *Bible Places*, 109). It was about two miles north of et-Tell, supposed by many to be the site of Ai. This defines the position of the "wilderness" mentioned here and at the siege of Ai.

gleaned] A remarkable metaphor. The destruction after the battle was to the slaughter in the battle, what the occasional gleaning of an ear of corn here and there is to the harvest itself.

pursued hard] See *v.* 42.

Gidom] is unknown.

rock Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned 48
again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with
the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the
beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all
the cities that they came to.

CH. XXI. 1—25. *How the tribe of Benjamin was preserved from extinction.*

Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, 21
There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin
to wife. And the people came *to* the house of God, and 2
abode there till even before God, and lift up their voices,
and wept sore; and said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this 3
come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one
tribe lacking in Israel? And it came to pass on the mor- 4

48. *turned again*] The Israelites, in their fury, destroyed not only the men of war, but the cities and all their defenceless inhabitants. This conduct admits of no justification, though they had been incensed by a shameless outrage, aggravated by the slaughter of many of their best troops. Hengstenberg, II. 3, 3, thinks that Deut. xiii. 12—18 constitutes the ground of Israel's action. But this precept relates to the crime of idolatry.

as well the men] As the Hebrew text stands, it is differently pointed, and must therefore be translated "as well the whole city." But as a slight change in the pointing makes infinitely better sense, the A.V. and most commentators have rendered as above. The LXX. translates ἐξῆς. "Wickedness could never bragge of any long prosperitie, nor complaine of the lacke of paiment." Bp. Hall.

came to hand...came to] See marg.

CH. XXI. 1—25. HOW THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN WAS PRESERVED FROM EXTINCTION.

1. *had sworn*] The oath is not recorded in the account of the meeting at Mizpeh, ch. xx. 1—11.

2. *the house of God*] Rather, **Beth-el.**

before God] i.e. before the ark. See note on ch. xx. 18.

wept sore] Lit. wept *a great weeping*. "They have sworne and now upon cold bloud repent them. If the oath were not just, why would they take it? and if it were just why did they recant it? Oathes doe not only require justice, but judgment." Bp. Hall.

3. *be...lacking*] Lit. be *mustered*. Hence to be *missing* at the muster as in 1 Sam. xx. 8, 18, 25, xxv. 7. The integrity of the family of Jacob was a point of honour among his descendants, a fact which in their first fury against the offending tribe they had altogether forgotten. "The Urim and Thummim approved the punishment of Benjamin, but not the oaths and cruelty with which it was accompanied." Cassel.

row, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and
5 offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For *they* had made a great oath concerning *him* that came not up to the LORD *to* Mizpeh, saying, He shall
6 surely be put to death. And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe
7 cut off from Israel *this* day. How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that
8 *we* will not give them of our daughters to wives? And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up *to* Mizpeh to the LORD? And behold, there came
9 none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. For

4. *built there an altar*] Perhaps nothing more is meant than that they prepared there an altar for the tabernacle which had been brought thither. David, it is true (2 Sam. xxiv. 25), and even Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 17) built another altar beside the altar in the tabernacle. See also ch. vi. 24. But it seems hardly likely that under the high-priesthood of Phinehas what he regarded as so high a crime (Josh. xxii. 13—20) would have been committed without protest from him, and quite as unlikely that if he had protested such protest would have been left unrecorded. Similar offerings are recorded to have been made in ch. xx. 26. If the altar were built then, it is nevertheless quite in accordance with the style of the Hebrew historians to mention its building here. Cf. for instance Gen. xxviii. 19 with Judg. i. 23, Josh. iii. 12, with iv. 2, xi. 21 with xv. 14, 15.

5. *congregation*] There are two words translated *congregation* in the A.V., the one referring rather to the *place* of meeting (*'edah*), the other (*kahal*—LXX. ἐκκλησία—answering to our *call*) referring rather to the *summons* which brought them together. It is the latter which is used here.

had made a great oath] Rather, **the great oath was** taken, just as modern canonists speak of "the greater excommunication." The penalty of death was reserved for the more heinous offences. See Exod. xxi. 12, xxxv. 2, &c.; Levit. xx. 9; 10 Numb. i. 51.

shall surely be put to death] Rather, **shall surely die.** The A.V. alternates between the two translations.

6. *And the children of Israel*] Here, as usual in this section, we have a fuller repetition of the former narrative. In the middle of *v.* 8 the history is once more taken up.

8. *of the tribes*] Either we must take the word *tribe* as in ch. xx. 12, or supply the word "family" or "city." "What one city is there," &c.

Jabesh-gilead] See 1 Sam. xi. 1—11, xxxi. 11—13; 2 Sam. ii. 4, 5.

the people were numbered, and behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and 10
commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that 11
hath lien by man. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known 12
no man by lying with *any* male: and they brought them unto the camp *to* Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

"The name is preserved in the Wady Yabes, a deep glen with a perennial stream running down from Mt Ajalon to the Jordan, which it enters a little south of Beth-shean." Tristram, *Bible Places*, p. 327. So also Robinson, *Later Biblical Researches*, p. 319 (3rd ed.). The *town* has now no name except *Deir* (convent).

assembly] See *congregation*, *v.* 5.

9. *were numbered*] Or, *had been mustered.*

10. *congregation*] Here *'edah* (συναγωγή, LXX.). See note on *v.* 5.

of the valiantest] Lit. *of the sons of valour*, as in ch. xx. 44, 46.

Go and smite] For *this* barbarous command also there was no warrant in the law. From this and other circumstances, too numerous to mention here, we may learn how far the Law of Moses was in advance of the moral condition of those to whom it was given. Nevertheless, in spite of the failure of the Israelites to fulfil it, it was, even in the worst times, a perpetual silent witness for the truth, thus fulfilling the purpose assigned to it by St Paul, Gal. iii. 24. See Introduction, Ch. II.

11. *utterly destroy*] See note on ch. i. 17.

12. *And they found*] Dr Cassel supposes that, as no account is given of the carrying out of this cruel sentence, it was not executed, but that the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead purchased their exemption by giving up 400 of their unmarried women. This is of course possible, but even if the more natural inference from the silence of the historian were not that the sentence was executed, the words "and they found" very forcibly suggest it. So also do the words "saved alive" in *v.* 14. "Foure hundred virgins of Gilead have lost parents, and brethren and kindred, and now finde husbands in lieu of them. An inforced marriage is but a miserable comfort for such a losse...Into what troublesome and dangerous straits do men thrust themselves by either unjust or inconsiderate vowes?"—Bp. Hall.

Shiloh] The congregation had removed once again to their usual place of meeting. See *v.* 19.

in the land of Canaan] A mark of accuracy which might escape us, did we fail to remember that Jabesh-gilead was *not* in the land of Canaan, but across Jordan.

13 And the whole congregation sent *some* to speak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to
14 call peaceably unto them. And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet so they sufficed
15 them not. And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.
16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are
17 destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, *There must be* an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that
18 a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed *be* he that giveth a wife to
19 Benjamin. Then they said, Behold, *there is* a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly *in a place* which *is* on the north side

13. *sent some to speak*] Heb. *sent and spake.*

and to call peaceably unto them] Lit. *and they called to them peace*, i.e. invited them to a friendly conference.

14. *and yet so they sufficed them not*] Lit. *and they found not* sufficient *for them* thus.

17. There must be *an inheritance for them that be escaped out of Benjamin*] Or (2) as Keil renders, *possession of the saved shall be for Benjamin*, or (3) *a portion of escape remains for Benjamin*, or (4) *the inheritance of the escaped is* (the land which belongs) *to Benjamin*, i.e. the territory of Benjamin is the inheritance of those who have escaped. This gives the best sense.

that a tribe be not destroyed] Rather, **and a tribe shall not be wiped out.** So LXX. See 2 Kings xxi. 13. Also cf. Deut. xxv. 5, 6. "If God cares so much for individuals, how much more for a whole tribe." Hengstenberg.

18. *Howbeit*] Heb. *and.*

19. *Then they said*] Heb. *and* they said. The last verse stated the difficulty in the way of carrying out the resolution of *v.* 17. Here we have its solution.

feast] The word comes from a root signifying to *dance.* See 2 Sam. vi. 14; Ps. cl. 4, &c. Also *v.* 21. It was probably one of the three great feasts held in the year, but which of them we have no means of knowing. Hengstenberg and Jost, however, maintain that it is the Passover, and the former supposes the dances of the virgins to be in commemoration of the rejoicings in Exod. xv. See Introduction, Ch. II.

Shiloh] This has been identified with Seilûn, a place answering to the description in *v.* 19.

yearly] See note on ch. xi. 40.

in a place *which*] The words "in a place" should be omitted. This

of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go *to* the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye

minute description of the locality serves to explain the circumstances of the seizure of the virgins of Israel. The feast was kept a little to the east of the high road which led from Beth-el to the important town of Shechem. Beth-el was near the northern border of Benjamin, and Shiloh was not above ten miles to the northward. Thus the escape of the Benjamites into their own territory would be a matter of no great difficulty. This passage, though it is found in the LXX., may be a later insertion added at the time when Shiloh had ceased to be well-known to every Israelite (see Jer. vii. 12, 14, xxvi. 9). In David's time (see 1 Sam. vii. 2), it might be thought, Shiloh could hardly have needed a description, since it had so recently been the abode of the ark. But about one hundred years had elapsed from the time of the removal of the ark from Shiloh to the composition of this book. There was time for the site of Shiloh to be forgotten, especially if Shiloh were a district, as some have supposed, in which the ark was moved about, and its position at this particular time is thus indicated.

Lebonah] Now *Lubban*. See Robinson, *Researches in Palestine*, II. 272 (3rd ed.).

21. *come ye out*] Rather, **ye shall come out**, and so throughout the verse. The reader is reminded of the Rape of the Sabines.

and go] Rather, *ye shall go*, i.e. you will easily go. See note above, *v.* 19.

22. *Be favourable unto them*] This is a difficult verse. The only possible translation appears to be *grant us them* (i.e. the maidens) *as a favour*. And if it be objected that the word "them" is masculine, we may observe, not only that the masculine for the feminine is not unusual, but that it is applied to the virgins of *v.* 12, and that in the words "their fathers" and "their brothers" in this very verse the masculine and not the feminine pronoun is used. The LXX. rendered pity us in regard to them, the Chaldee, Syriac, Vulgate, incorrectly "have pity on them."

because we reserved not] Lit. *because we took not*, i.e. from among those doomed to death. Our word *except* is literally to *take out*. Others, however, would render *for we did not take each man's wife captive in war*, i.e. as at Jabesh. To this may be objected that the Masorites as

did not give unto them at *this* time, *that* you should be
23 guilty. And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their
24 inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from
25 thence every man to his inheritance. In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that* which *was* right in his own eyes.

well as the LXX. have "in *the* war," by which could hardly be meant the destruction of Jabesh.

for ye did not give] The *ye* is emphatic "for it was not *ye* who gave (your daughters) to them."

at this time, that *you should*] Rather, **then were ye transgressing**, i.e. in that case you would have been guilty of a transgression.

25. there was *no king in Israel*] This remark, doubtless written during the prosperous and orderly reign of David or Solomon, is no doubt indicative of the writer's belief that no such disorderly proceedings as these could have taken place under the regular government of a king, and may be regarded as an expression of his thankfulness that his lot was cast in more settled times.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

The Name Elohim.

In the note on ch. v. 8, an alternative rendering to "they chose new gods," that of the Vulgate "God chose new things," is mentioned. It should perhaps be explained that the word for "God" in Hebrew is in the plural, not, as might be expected, in the singular. The word *Elohim* is the plural of Eloah, a name derived from *El*, strength, also one of the names by which God is known to the Israelites. It is by many supposed to be what is called a *pluralis excellentiae*, that is to say a plural denoting some special dignity or excellence, just as monarchs call themselves "we," and the plural "you" has absurdly taken the place of the singular "thou" as the accustomed mode of address in many modern languages. Some, however, have regarded it as an indication of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. But it is perhaps best to understand it as expressive of the sum of many attributes. It is worthy of note that as the first idea of God entertained by the Aryan nations is brightness (Dyaus, Zeus, Deus), that of the Hebrews connected itself with *power*, until the attribute of perpetual self-existence (*Ehveh*, I am, from which comes *Jahveh*, "he is," commonly, but incorrectly pointed Jehovah) was revealed to Moses. For the name Jehovah see Note II. in 1 Samuel.

NOTE II.

Sisera.

The tradition about Sisera mentioned in the note on ch. iv. 2 is also to be found in a continuation of Jahn's *Hebrew Commonwealth*, by Professor Stuart, of the Theological College, Andover, U.S. This work was published in 1829. Here the descent of Rabbi Akiba from Sisera is mentioned with unhesitating confidence, but the only reference given is to Ganz, who wrote about a century after the Liber Jochassin. On examination, it appears that Ganz refers his readers to the Liber Jochassin aforesaid.

NOTE III.

Deborah's Song.

The following version of Deborah's song is offered to the student as indicating (1) its parallelisms, and (2) the construction of the poem. An attempt has also been made to indicate (3) the alliteration, which is, however, by no means a prominent feature in this ode.

Part I.

The Gathering of the Tribes.

1. *Prelude.*

For that our leaders took the lead,
For that the people willingly offered themselves,
Bless ye the Lord!

2. *Introduction. The glories of Jehovah.*

Hear, O ye kings!
Give ear, O ye chieftains!
I to Jehovah, even I, will sing:
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Jehovah, when Thou wentest forth from Seir;
When Thou marchedst from the field of Edom;
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
The clouds also dropped water;
The mountains melted[1] from the presence of Jehovah,
Yon Sinai from the presence of Jehovah, God of Israel.

3. *Strophe. Israel's affliction.*

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were unoccupied[2],
And the travellers walked through by-ways.
Rulers ceased[3] in Israel, they ceased
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.

They chose new gods;
Then was war in the gates:
Was a shield to be seen, or a spear
Among forty thousand in Israel?

4. *Antistrophe. Israel's thanksgiving.*

My heart is with the governors of Israel!
With those who willingly offered themselves among the people.
Bless ye the Lord!

[1] Or, "flowed down."
[2] Or, "the caravans ceased."
[3] Or, "the villages ceased."

O ye who ride on white asses,
  Who sit on the seat of honour;
And ye who pass by the way,
    Sing ye!

Safe home among the water-troughs from amid the shout of the archers,
There they rehearse the righteous acts of Jehovah,
  The righteous acts of His rule[1] in Israel.
Then went down to the gates the people of Jehovah.

Part II.

The Battle.

1. *Prelude.*

Awake, awake, Deborah!
  Awake, awake, utter a song!
Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive, O son of Abinoam!

2. *Strophe I. The Praise of the Patriots.*

Then came down a remnant to[2] the great ones,
  The people of Jehovah came down to[2] me against the valiant;
From Ephraim came those whose root is in Amalek;
  Benjamin followed thee among thy people.
From Machir came down rulers,
  From Zebulun those who muster the array;
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
  And if Issachar, then Barak:
    Into the valley was he sent on foot[3].

3. *Antistrophe I. The Reproach of the Laggards.*

Amid the water-courses of Reuben,
  High were the resolves of heart;
Why didst thou abide among the sheep-folds,
  Listening to the pipings for the flocks?
By the water-courses of Reuben great were the searchings of heart.
Gilead dwelt beyond Jordan.
  Dan, why sojourned he by the ships?
Asher sat still by the sea shore,
  And on his creeks he kept his dwelling.

4. *Chorus. The praises of Zebulun and Naphtali.*

Zebulun is a people that jeoparded his life even unto death,
  And Naphtali, on the heights of the field.

[1] Or, "of His villages." [2] Or, "for."
[3] Or, "into the valley they poured at his feet."

5. *Epode. The Defeat.*

Kings came; they fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo:
Spoil of silver took they none!
From heaven they fought,
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera!
The torrent Kishon swept them away;
That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon:
March on, my soul, in strength!
Then clanged the horse-hoofs
In the mad career[1], the mad career of the mighty ones.

6. *Strophe 2. The Curse of Meroz.*

Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of Jehovah;
Curse ye bitterly them that dwell in her!
For that they came not to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah among[2] the valiant!

7. *Antistrophe 2. The praises of Jael.*

Blessed above women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite!
Blessed be she above women in the tent!
He asked water; she gave him milk;
She brought him butter in a lordly dish;
She put forth her hand to the tent-pin,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer.
She smote Sisera with the hammer, crushed his head:
And she crashed and smote through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down,
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead!

8. *Epode. The mother of Sisera awaiting his arrival.*

Through the window looked she and cried aloud,
The mother of Sisera through the lattice:
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"
Her wise princesses answered her,
Yea, she herself answered her own words;
"Surely they are finding, dividing the spoil!
One damsel, two damsels for each man of war,
A spoil of divers colours for Sisera,
A spoil of divers colours embroidered,
Dyed and double embroidered, for[3] the necks of the spoil!"

9. *Chorus.*

So perish all Thine enemies, Jehovah!
And let them that love Thee be as the going forth of the sun in his might!

[1] This may either refer to the fugitives or the pursuers.
[2] Or. "against." [3] Or. "on."

NOTE IV.

Jephthah's Vow.

On a point where so much difference of opinion exists, the student may wish to have a list of the principal authorities on either side. As has been said, the early authorities, including Josephus and the Chaldee Paraphrast, Jonathan Ben Uzziel, were unanimous in favour of the belief that Jephthah put his daughter to death in strict fulfilment of his vow. Jonathan introduces a curious passage to this effect in his Targum. The passage runs as follows: "And he fulfilled the vow which he had vowed upon her, and she knew no man: and it was made a statute in Israel that no man should offer his son or his daughter for a burnt-offering, as did Jephthah the Gileadite, who did not consult Phinehas the priest; for if he had consulted Phinehas the priest, he would have redeemed her with money." The anachronism of about 250 years here is singular, but it does not of course affect the question how the Targum regards Jephthah as having acted. Rabbi David Kimchi (circ. 1200) appears to have been the first who held a contrary opinion. He was followed, after an interval of three centuries and a half, by Grotius, who says that he cannot believe that a man of whom faith was predicated (Heb. xi. 32) could have done such a deed. About a century later Ludovicus Capellus wrote a careful dissertation on the point, taking the same view, and Hengstenberg and other later authorities have also adopted it, some supposing that the Jewish virgins went to condole with Jephthah's daughter (see marg. ch. xi. 40) for four days in each year. Bp. Horsley believes that what "for two thousand years has puzzled all translators and expositors" has been "cleared up" by a sermon preached before the University of Oxford by Dr Randolph, Margaret Professor of Divinity, in 1766. This interpretation supposes that Jephthah vowed to the Lord what first came out of his house, and promised Him also a burnt-offering. Dr Adam Clarke inclined to this opinion. But the great weight of authority is on the other side. The Christian fathers are unanimous on the point. From the time of Tertullian (if the five metrical books against Marcion be his) onward, they with one consent explain the passage of a burnt-offering. They discuss the question whether the act be compatible with the saintliness ascribed to Jephthah in Heb. xi., and on the whole decide that it was not incompatible with it, on the ground that Jephthah must afterwards have repented. This is the view of Aquinas, in his questions (2, 2, quest. 88, Art. 2). Cornelius a Lapide follows on the same side. So does Calmet. Drusius asks why Jephthah did not redeem his daughter, referring to Levit. xxvii. 4 (see note on ch. xi. 35), and suggests that he was probably ignorant of the law on that point. Lightfoot (1602—1675) and Rosenmüller (1768—1835) both believe that Jephthah offered his daughter in sacrifice. Thomas Scott (1747—1821) anticipates the remark of Hitzig (ch. xi. 37, note) that Jephthah's daughter would have had a whole life-time in which to bewail her virginity, so that she would not have needed the two months she asked for that purpose. Of writers

during the present century, Jost, Ewald, Hitzig and Dean Milman may be mentioned as believing in the literal fulfilment of Jephthah's vow. A passage in the notes on the Douay Bible (ed. 1609) may be interesting for its casuistry, based on the general opinion of the Fathers. It states that Jephthah did wrong to vow, but would have done worse had he not fulfilled his vow. And it comments with some severity upon the remarks of a "new glosser of the English Bible," who said that by Jephthah's "rash vow and wicked performance his victory was defaced," and that he was "overcome with blind zeal, not considering whether the vow was lawful or no." The allusion is to the Geneva Version, published in 1560.

NOTE IV.

The Physical features of Palestine as illustrating the history.

It will be observed that the Israelites, after their occupation of Palestine, were chiefly a mountainous people. In the north, Tyre and Sidon, and in the south, Gaza and Ascalon, belonged to their enemies, and if reduced at all, were never permanently reduced. Dan and Asher appear to be the only tribes which devoted themselves to maritime enterprises, and the latter tribe largely availed itself of the assistance of the tributary Canaanites (ch. i. 31, 32). It has been conjectured (see Jost, *Geschichte des Israelitischen Volkes*, I. 195) that agriculture in general flourished chiefly in the north, while Judah, with a less promising soil, reared at a greater expenditure of labour, corn, wine and oil. The smooth downs on the eastern side of the Jordan (known as the *Mishor*) were suited for cattle. Perhaps the cause which led to the eventual preponderance of Judah—for secondary causes need not be altogether left out of the account—was the fact that (1) the for the most part chalky and sterile soil needed careful terracing and irrigation (see note on Negeb, ch. i. 15), and that this tribe was inured to war by its constant conflicts with the Philistines, the most warlike race which inhabited Palestine. Thus it probably escaped to a great extent the calamities that fell on the rest of Israel, and having its hands fully occupied, held itself excused from taking any share in the conflicts of the remaining tribes—a selfish policy which ended in its complete subjugation by the Philistines.

This peculiar situation of the Israelites subserved a Divine purpose. Shut out by the Phoenician and Philistine cities from the sea coast, its own seaport towns left chiefly in the hands of their Phoenician inhabitants, cut off moreover by a wide tract of sterile land from the great highways of commerce in the East, the Israelites led an isolated life. This isolation was further increased by the disruption of the kingdom, and the consequent restriction of the Mosaic polity to the southern and more insignificant portion. Thus the influence of the Law was confined, as it was intended to be confined, to one people, until the time came

when the "middle wall of partition" was to be broken down, and when, its scope enlarged, the preparatory dispensation should merge into one better adapted to the needs of humanity.

The physical features of the country serve to explain the history in one other respect. They render intelligible the narrative of the hostilities at Gibeah. The unresisting slaughter of so vast a host by so small a body would be inexplicable, as well as the selection of one particular tribe for the attack, did we not remember that the Israelites were evidently (see note on ch. iv. 3) but scantily provided with the appliances of war, and that the country to the immediate north of Jerusalem was precipitous, and therefore placed the attacking party at an immense disadvantage. The only means, either at Ai or Gibeah, of capturing the city was by drawing the defenders away from their vantage ground by a feigned flight. This circumstance may assist the explorer in identifying Gibeah, the site of which has not been positively ascertained, since Lieut. Conder, the latest authority, is at issue with Canon Tristram and earlier explorers in fixing it at Tuleil el Ful. That it was a town is clear from ch. xix. 15. That it was not Geba, though it is called so more than once in the sacred narrative, appears from Josephus' account of its distance from Jerusalem, as well as from the whole course of the narrative, which forbids us to suppose that it could have been more than a very short distance from Jerusalem. Lastly, it must have been in a ravine or on a rock, where the slings of the Benjamites could be used with good effect upon the helpless masses of their opponents.

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